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VOLUME ONE, ISSUE NO TWENTY

EARLY WINTER 2004

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REVEREND ROVE'S RED RUBES ROCK RICKETY REPUBLIC RIGHTEOUS RABBLE RATIFIES ROGUE RULER'S REIGN

CONTINENTAL TREK RALEIGHS VOTERS & SCHWINNS STATES

Five Swing State Activists
Pick Ballots' Krypto Locks
With Pens & Perseverance

A TOUR DE VOTE

BY ARIELLA COHEN

It takes four days to drive the 2,809 miles from Portland, Oregon to Washington, D.C., but this fall, with the help of a blue Giant hybrid ten-speed and nine other young people on bicycles, I made the trip in ninety. Over the three months leading up to the 2004 election, we bicycled to cities across the country, joining up along the route with community organizations to register new voters and educate people about their rights at the polls.

Each state has its own electoral code and its own method of administering elections. Some are more restrictive than others. For example, Maryland prohibits convicted felons from ever voting again, while Pennsylvania re-enfranchises them as soon as they're released from prison. Oregonians get their ballots delivered in the mail three weeks ahead of time, while some Ohioans have to wait until three days after the race is already over. But no matter what the local election laws, everywhere we went we were met with battalions of volunteers, idealistic and hungry alike, who took up the temporary working papers of the canvasser in order to get out the vote.

The following interviews, conducted shortly after the November 2 election, will hopefully help begin a discussion about our electoral processes and the possibility of building more inclusive models, one state at a time.

As director of the Office of Community Justice and Outreach in Philadelphia's jails, part of Wilfredo Rojas's job is to make sure eligible inmates receive ballots.

Ariella Cohen: Did Bush win this election honestly, or did he steal it? **Wilfredo Rojas:** This election was a victory for democracy. A huge number of new voters came out and there wasn't fraud on the same scale as 2000. Of course we are still struggling to enfranchise groups of people—inmates especially—and give everyone access to ballots, but generally I would say that the Republican win is legitimate.

AC: Were you surprised by the outcome? **WR:** Clearly, there is a divided electorate and that opposition got people to the polls. They felt passionate about the election because the issues were clear. Usually elections revolve around the candidates' personalities, but this time the opinions were dis-

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No Suitcases for this Fellow!

BY LORD WHIMSY

My family has been here 300 years. My commitments and convictions define me; my friends, work and loved ones are all here. Furthermore, as someone committed to the Enlightenment ideals that brought this republic into being and others to the light of democracy, I have a solemn duty to help bring this country back to its founding principles, and to take it from those who have hijacked it.

No, there are more important things than my own personal fulfillment; to leave when my country needs me most is nothing short of moral cowardice. This country may not deserve us right now, but to cut and run when faced with adversity renders us undeserving of the more just society we hope to build.

I stay and fight.

Retreating to the Private

BY KEN KALFUS

Personal history always informs your appreciation of current events. For me, this moment in American history recalls 1991 in Belgrade, where I was living at the time, at the start of the Balkan wars. I'm not thinking as much of the former Yugoslavia's terrible ethnic conflicts as I am of the more profound, murderous division in Yugoslav society between the liberal humanists and the nationalists of all stripes. The parties of the right appropriated the symbols of patriotism and religious faith, dominated the broadcast media and launched a series of ruinous wars that cemented their hold on political power. Intellectuals were derided as effete fools and liberals who preached tolerance were derided as traitors. With the collapse of the peacetime economy, the nationalists' criminal sponsors lined their pockets. I don't think it's too much of a stretch to compare the aims and methods of George W. Bush to those of Slobodan Milosevic.

What do liberals do when they live in illiberal regimes? Whether they're in Belgrade, Tehran, Brezhnev's Russia or Pinochet's Chile, they may continue to pursue whatever politics are permitted, but I think the preservation and growth of humanistic values depend more on the tasks we perform in our private lives and in local civil society. That means taking care of our families, teaching our kids well, serving our communities, taking personal measures to preserve the environment, practicing honesty, reading good books and engaging in intelligent, earnest conversation. These sound like small consolations, but they change the world every day.

THE PITCH

BY DON SILVER

From: Aaron
To: Jerry N., CBS

Jerry, what would you say if I told you I could deliver 55,000,000 television viewers to CBS for the first episode of a new show? You'd say, "bring it on!" wouldn't you?

Introducing: "Shadow Government." Reality TV meets the election of 2004, starring John Kerry and John Edwards as president and vice president of the United States (we plan to share set costs with the West Wing), showing the newly-elected administration behind closed doors setting policy, wrangling with Republicans, and responding to real world events as they happen!

Think about it—Republicans running the country with real time live input from the Democrats. The Bush Administration caters to the base, and we bring regular people to the cash registers. I guarantee you this will change politics!

I'm still waiting to hear back from the Edwards camp. I'd like to open with Elizabeth and the whole breast cancer thing. Take the cameras into the waiting room, get close with the family, do the biopsy like it was "CSI Miami"—get the cells swimming around in a Petri dish... I want something that will hook women, something people can rally around. We can bring men in later with something technical, like global warming. Get the big movie studios and the music industry to sponsor it—"only emit gas at home in front of your TV" (he-hel).

I've talked with the Kerry people. They want to open with something strong and presidential—a ceremony with a foreign dignitary, a secret meet-

ing at Camp David, a candid moment on Air Force One. Who can blame them? Their guy's had a tough week.

I know what you're thinking, World Leaders. Will they participate? Will they be funny? Can you even do subtleties in prime time? This will NOT be a problem. My people have feelers out to Castro, Qaddafi and Chirac. We can get them AFTRA passes, use a split screen, solid color backgrounds—the whole nine yards. I picture Putin, Blair and Sharon once the ratings kick in. The Bush people will love watching Kerry try stuff, stealing what works and taking the credit.

Jerry, there are a million details to work out, but the bottom line is: we can't let the 55,000,000 people who voted for John Kerry down! You had real emotion there. You had a sense this mattered. You had a character people seemed to care a little bit about. Christ, my own kids were for Kerry. If we can get this on the air fast enough, Jerry, half the country will have something to hope for again.

What we need now is vision. A network with a big view. Obviously, Fox isn't going to do this. Let me be blunt with you. After the Dan Rather thing, you people aren't going to be invited into the White House for a long time. You need something edgy, racy, post-modern. This creates a new front line and puts your people on it. You'd be influencing the news and reporting it.

Give me a call, buddy. This is too hot to let simmer. I have meetings scheduled tomorrow with the other networks that I'd just as soon cancel.

Yours,
Aaron
Don Silver's first novel will be released next fall by Ecco Press. He lives in Philadelphia

ONE EXILE IN MEXICO CAN'T PUT HEX ON TYRRANOSAURUS TEX

A Border Town's Streets
Turn to Gullies and Mud
Under One Party Rule

SEÑOR BUSH: NO AMIGO

BY MARA HVISTENDAHL

REYNOSA, Mexico—Until a few years ago, this was a squatter colony, and it isn't difficult to understand why. Until the very poor arrived here on the border to look for work in the maquiladoras, the land was not considered habitable. When it rains the streets become a muddy morass, and lacking galoshes, the women wear high-heeled boots to the store on the corner. To avoid making the mud deeper with their bathwater, dishwater, and laundry water, people dig canals out of the mud. As the streets dry, rusted pick-up trucks cut them up into dusty rollercoasters. Residents fill in the canals, the pot-holes, and the tire tracks with trash. And then it rains again.

Things don't have to be this way. People own their land (the neighborhood even has a name: Colonia Esperanza, the neighborhood of hope), and there are measures that could be taken to make it more livable. Aside from the city paving the streets which would be nothing short of a miracle, it could send tractors to flatten out the bumps, for example. But in the seven months I have spent in Reynosa over the last four years, the first time I saw a tractor here was last week.

"What is going on?" I asked Verónica, the woman I am staying with, as the hulking machine rolled by her house. "Oh, that," she answered. "They do it every time there is an election, and then we don't see them for three years." Tacked to the sides of the tractor were huge photos of a mayoral candidate. Verónica was sitting with a neighbor, chatting, and they laughed at how the tractor driver only made one round of the block—enough to get the message across but not to smooth out the terrain—and then moved on. Another tractor, with signs for another candidate, showed up a few days later.

The election of Vicente Fox in 2000, after seventy-one years of rule by the Partido Revolucionario Institucional, got pundits talking about a resurgence of democracy in Mexico. Indeed, many people here believe that Fox's party, the Partido Acción Nacional, is improving their lives (although this comes from

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PUFFY, JOVI, MOBY DIDN'T DO DIDDY FOR LOSER PARTY

Soros Bucks, Morris Spots,
Chomsky Blog, Foer Pals
All Nice But Not Enough

SUPERIORITY COMPLEX

BY CHRISTINE SMALLWOOD

My sharp, brilliant, world-traveling mother, who broke gender barriers as an executive in the boys' clubs of the corporate world in the 1970s, isn't interested in popularity. She watches MTV sometimes, to see what the kids are up to, but when it comes right down to it, she couldn't care less about what's cool. She doesn't have time to be pandered to, and she's not interested in a politician feeling her pain. Like actor Ron Silver, who made waves in Hollywood when he spoke at this year's GOP convention, she thinks it's important to stand out from and up to your peers. And like Ron, she cast her vote this year for George W. Bush.

When I asked her why Bush won, why groups like America Coming Together (ACT) and MoveOn and Downtown for Democracy and IndyVoter and Music for America and Vote or Die and Vote for Change and Rock the Vote didn't save us, she said that the Democrats have a bad attitude. And not in a good, James Dean way. In an obnoxious, condescending way.

Apparently, my mom—who, in September, was this close to voting for Kerry—got so tired of Democrats acting like anyone who voted for Bush must be an ignorant, provincial, flat-earth fool, that she just stopped paying attention. She's usually gregarious, feisty, and up for any debate, but she eventually refused to discuss politics with her co-workers and acquaintances. And, she suspects—and I'm inclined to agree with her—that thousands across the country did the same. They're not the secret Republicans who talk liberal but, all alone in the booth with the ghosts of shoe bombers, vote Bush; she and her kin will tell you their opinions, if you ask them nicely. They're not trying to hide. But they do feel a little persecuted.

A senior staff member of MoveOn PAC told me that it is precisely this attitude problem among Kerry supporters that cost them the opportunity to reach Republicans.

"It's easy to think you're smarter," she said. "But [name calling] is the anti-strategy; it's the lazy strategy. It's the way to feel good about sitting in a coffeshop. It's a legitimizing for your inactivity."

turn to CAMPAIGN, page 6

A Note to the Reader

On the night of November 2 we sat agape in front of the television, watching the television men preside over the brightly colored maps of an imaginary country. This is right where the president likes us to be. He is not a well-spoken man, and prefers letting the results of his plans speak for themselves to piecing a sentence together. The effects of his first four years have been devastating, and if you've glanced at these pages or any others over the last hundred weeks, you're already well aware. We can only predict, as you likely have, that his next four years will be even worse. We wish we could point you to the scapegoat or silver lining here, but there is neither.

As terrible as his victory is, the result itself says nothing about the state of our country. The wise were not outnumbered by fools on Election Day, but outfoxed by the men who draw the county lines and guard the gates outside the polling booth. The red versus the blue is convenient shorthand for any armchair anthropologist paid to churn out a few thousand words a week, but it is a poor substitute for knowing one's own country. A mythical wall has been erected between the "two Americas," and its lines are almost arbitrary. Had one in forty Kerry-voting Pennsylvanians changed their minds in the voting booth or one in four Kerry-voting Philadelphians decided to stay home on November 2, the Keystone State would now be part of "Red America," and we'd be reading headlines about Bush's "electoral landslide."

So pay no attention to self-appointed surveyors who try to divide the provinces of belief and doubt, the country and the city, the interests of you and your countrymen. What better way to subjugate a nation than to split it along invisible lines? The commentators trying to divine the nation's heart with a box of Crayolas are the same ones who sat hushed and rapt when Colin Powell told us about the weapons of mass destruction, the ones who remembered the infamy of Abu Ghraib for all of a fortnight. Now they have set themselves up as mapmakers, and wish to make every person believe that he alone inhabits an island of good sense in a rising sea of savagery. They are correct to say a civil war taking place, but its fronts are not so easily drawn. The United States is not a jigsaw of fifty states or a purple scrim of variously shaded counties, but a collection of millions of individual consciences. It is within these borders that common sense is doing battle with fear, and we maintain that common sense will ultimately prevail.

Nothing changed on November 2. George Bush is still the president. We are still aligned against him, as we are compelled to by our beliefs in peace among nations, equality among men, and the obligation of the government to be honest with the governed. For a time, John Kerry was a vessel for these beliefs, but his defeat does not equal ours. Fifty-six million Americans have been enough of this failed president, and so long as each of us remains bent on seeing his agenda defeated, it is he who should be afraid. We stand ready to do whatever is in our power to erase the awful mark the president intends to leave on history. With time, our rights and alliances will be restored, the wealth of the land will be returned to the people, and the world will no longer have to live in fear of America. Our work will not cease until history forgets this little man who rose too high, and there is plenty of work to be done.

Let Them Eat Cookies

BY BRYANT PALMER

On the morning of November 3, I began my sixth grade English classes with this writing prompt: "If I were president..." Here's a selection of responses from my students:

If I were president I would ban homework.
If I were president I would stop the war in Iraq.
If I were president I would fix everything that's happening in Iraq.
If I were president I would support gay marriage.
If I were president I would let people who are gay get married and not take away a woman's right to choose.
If I were president I would make sure abortion doesn't become illegal.
If I were president I would redecorate the White House and make it bigger.
If I were president I would cancel school.
If I were president I wouldn't start a draft.
If I were president I would work with other countries to make peace.

In case it's not clear from the responses, my students are overwhelmingly Democratic. I teach at a reform Jewish day school in Manhattan, after all. Still, standing in front of the classroom on Wednesday morning and listening to these young and hopeful and enthusiastic responses that reflect in so many ways tolerance and concern for the welfare of others, I was struck by how different the responses might be from sixth graders in a red state like, say, Alabama, where I grew up.

Several classes from different grades gathered in our auditorium to watch Kerry's concession speech that afternoon, and not once did a teacher have to ask a student to pay attention; we were all stunned into silence. By the end of the day, the most frequent comment I'd heard from students and teachers alike was, "I can't believe Bush won."

Since the election, there's been much talk of the enormous gap between the beliefs of people in red and blue states. Some have suggested that we urbanites are out of touch with the average American. I'm not sure if that's true, but I am sure of this: I'm happy living in my blue state and teaching my blue students at my blue school, and win or lose, I wouldn't have it any other way.

Bryant Palmer can be contacted at bryantpalmer3@hotmail.com

BANANA REPUBLIC PUTS SELF IN HANDS OF MONKEY MAN

Our Oval Office Squatter
Wrangles Four Year Lease
From Lazy Landlords

NECKS ELECT NOOSE

BY ALEXANDER SWARTWOUT

America is the greatest damned mass of foolish, ignorant peasantry the world has ever produced. Not once before in the human race's mutable existence has there been a nation of such monumental idiocy; and what's more astounding is that history has given these dopes self-determination. In the exercise of this self-determination, America (if we are not so skeptical but as to actually believe the tally) has chosen to let George W. Bush lead it for another four critical years, and we are at once given a demonstration of our extraordinary mass moronism, and of the stunning depth of our ancestors' genius.

Now it might seem to go against my famous tempered humanity to say such a thing as this—to argue that I, in fact, know better than sixty million American citizens. How can I, you ask, call the whole race stupid and still claim to admire it as a humanist must? Well, this is exactly what I am arguing. I do know better than the lot of you: it is my occupation to do so, it is the singular reason that I have taken up the mantle of public philosopher. I know that the sensible choice this Tuesday past would have been to exterminate the presidency of Mr. Bush, and to every one of those who cast their vote for this outcome, I offer that you are a buffoon and an intellectual stumblebum, if you love your country and your species. But unlike the rest of my punditious colleagues, who will be reeling for months once they have finally summoned the muster to resume their work, I will not dwell on the outcome. You are idiots, all, but there is method to it—and it is my job, also, to understand this.

Under such circumstances as our nation today finds itself—where the immense mass of citizens are half-educated ingrates, where the people are completely cut off from their own experience of the wider world by the extraordinary power of technology and informative media, where religion and superstition have filled the mushy minds of an entire generation of frightened recluses—under such circumstances as these, how are we to celebrate the idea of democracy, how are we to wish for the rule of the majority, when indeed the majority is not fit to rule themselves? Mrs. Jefferson, Madison, Hamilton and the rest have devised just such a conundrum

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COMMENTARY

Appealing to the Base

BY JUSTIN VOGT

Comfortably ensconced in the friendly environs of a Fox News studio, the Turd Blossom gazed toward a monitor. On it, a liberal critic of George W. Bush complained that the president had won reelection by stoking the "fears and passions of the evangelical right" and that, during the course of a "dishonest campaign," the president had "divided the nation with gay-baiting."

The almost visibly salivating Fox News host awaited a caustic response from the Turd Blossom, as President Bush—unwilling to let his chief strategist's bristles grow too tight—sometimes calls Karl Rove. (The name colorfully denotes a round pile of bovine waste.)

"Well," said Rove, "I think it's a sad commentary. This fellow seems to think the American people are driven to vote in record numbers by fear and an appeal to base emotion."

How could the poor fellow have gotten such an idea? Certainly not from Bush campaign ads like "Wolves," which so accurately and reasonably depicts the world as it truly is: a dark, scary forest teeming with awful monsters that will eat us up if we are weak little boys and girls. Surely no sensible voter could construe such a message as an appeal to fear or base emotion.

Yes, stunning things can emerge from the normally pursed lips of the Turd Blossom. But the president also calls Rove "the architect" of his victory, and if there is any one person most responsible for our current predicament, it is indeed Rove. The man is the living incarnation of four decades of conservative strategizing that achieved a lurid climax in last Tuesday's national orgy of willful ignorance. He embodies the alchemy of the Right that has enabled Republicans to build a national political coalition whose strength is matched only by its improbability. Rove—perhaps "the Turd Architect" is the most suitable nickname—has succeeded in building his party a new house of worship and filling it with parishioners convinced that the party of Mammon is also the party of Jesus.

The question is this: how do we knock the thing down without killing everyone inside? Because the truth is that if progressive ideals are going to get a fair hearing in our lifetimes, we need some of those congregants to file out from behind Rove's pews and join our side.

Democrats widely agree that their party and its candidates have failed to connect with a large segment of the electorate on a broad range of social, cultural, and spiritual issues that have been conveniently mislabeled as "moral values." But liberal and conservative commentators have both begun to question the accuracy of election day exit polls that named these "moral values" as the issue most important to voters. And even Rove points out that the proportion of people who voted primarily on substantive religious issues did not increase significantly this year.

Perhaps what has actually increased is the proportion of voters who are motivated by questions of cultural authenticity. Thomas Frank's much-discussed book, *What's the Matter With Kansas?*, fleshes out this theme at length, and—surprisingly—the Democratic Leadership Council's response to the election disaster sums it up neatly. "The problem," according to the DLC, "is that many millions of voters simply do not believe that Democrats take their cultural fears and resentments seriously, and that Republicans do."

By focusing on the cultural sources of those fears and resentments, Bush appealed to many voters who don't necessarily share his (supposedly) deep-seated religious convictions, but who nevertheless feel more comfortable with him as a leader, especially in troubled times like ours. The perceived strength of Bush's convictions on "moral issues" makes him seem more "authentic" than Kerry, more "real," more "American" to these voters, whose passions are rooted in the resentment of a largely mythic "elite" residing in coastal, "Blue America."

This authenticity creates a halo effect: Bush's strong and consistent convictions on religious and cultural issues inspire confidence in his management of economic and foreign policy issues (what some liberals like to call "real issues"). That's why so many Americans voted for Bush even though they understand that Iraq is a mess, that the economy is in bad shape, that their healthcare costs are rising, and that Osama bin Laden and his terrorist network are still a threat. They might have doubts about Bush's record and his policies, but there's little doubt in their minds about his authenticity.

It's a strange, perhaps distinctly American phenomenon that a man like Bush can connect with what might be called "authenticity voters" when, in reality, he is both far closer to the despised elite than they ever will be, and also more conservative in his religious beliefs than many of them are. Columnist Eric Alterman, among others, thinks it has everything to do with communication. "He speaks their language," writes Alterman. "Our guys don't. And unless they learn it, we will continue to condemn this country and those parts of the world it affects to a regime of malign neglect at best—malignant and malicious assault at worst."

New York Times columnist Nicholas Kristof agrees, and adds that Democrats must learn how to talk about religion. "Don't be afraid of religion," he advises. "And argue theology with Republicans: there's much more biblical ammunition to support liberals than conservatives."

It's true that liberals could do a better job articulating coherent positions on moral, religious, and cultural issues. But what bothers me about the advice of these commentators is that it focuses on how to communicate with a cer-

tain segment of people by better understanding how they conceive of what they want and then feeding them language that is designed to resonate with them. It short, it sounds like consumer research.

That's the style of politics Republicans have perfected over the past decade with the help of market research gurus like Frank Luntz: target the groups you need, find out what words and images they respond to, and re-package the things you're already determined to sell by framing them within this new context.

The last thing we need is a Luntzian re-branding of Democratic policies and progressive ideas so that they seem to have a basis in religious values. Don't like "a woman's right to choose"? How about "a woman's freedom to make a moral decision"? Don't like "environmental regulation"? How about "our duty to protect God's green Earth"? A strategy that attempts to attract voters through linguistic repackaging will only widen the authenticity gap. Americans—yes, even bible-toting, heartland-inhabiting, Bush-voting Americans—are savvy to the impact of consumer research on the words they hear and the images they see. Half-assed attempts to retrofit secularist progressive

ideas with Judeo-Christian religious imprimatur would be seen for what they would be—insincere—and would do more harm than good.

But there is one page from the conservative handbook that Democrats and liberals should steal. Just as conservatives have done, liberals need to demonstrate unshakable convictions on a certain core set of issues, articles of a secularist belief system that map a coherent and consistent liberal worldview: universal healthcare, progressive taxation, reproductive rights, tolerance, multilateralism, environmental protection. The hope—and I must admit that at this dark hour, it is no more than a hope—is that by sticking to our godless guns, we will get our own halo effect.

We're never going to get the evangelical Christian vote. But we don't need it. We need the authenticity vote, and there's only one way to get it: by actually being authentic, and by using our authenticity on core economic, social policy, and foreign policy issues to persuade voters that we can also be trusted to manage cultural and religious matters. It will take time, but this new culture war over authenticity—which is really a political culture war—can be won.

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Where Art Thou, Turd Blossom?

All the President's Nicknames

Those of us who have worked closely with the president know how fond he is of giving nicknames to his friends and associates. Some say this is a sign of his warm and informal nature, the boyish simplicity of his populist heart. More critical observers suggest that the president is a bully who renames his associates as a means of demeaning and controlling them. Still others have advanced the theory that he simply isn't good with names, which we find to be the most plausible explanation. In any case, here is a list of some aliases Bush has assigned to pledges in the trillion-dollar fraternity house known to you as the federal government. Memorize them before the next cabinet meeting and let your fellow aides know who's the true insider.

POPPY
BUSHIE
KENNY BOY
BOY GENIUS
TURD BLOSSOM
PABLO
HIGH PROPHET
BIG COUNTRY
TREE MAN
PABLO
POOTIE-POOT
DINO
THE COBRA
STRETCH
LIL STRETCH
SUPER STRETCH
FACTOR

George H.W. Bush, 41st president, father
Laura Bush, First Lady, wife
Kenneth Lay, former CEO of Enron, friend & supporter
Karl Rove, senior advisor
Karl Rove, senior advisor, following reports of favoritism
Paul O'Neill, former secretary of the Treasury, also BIG O
Karen Hughes, special advisor, also HURRICANE KAREN
Joe Albaugh, director of Federal Emergency Management Agency
Unknown forest service official
Paul Wellstone, former U.S. Senator
Vladimir Putin, president of Russia
Jean Chrétien, former prime minister of Canada
Maureen Dowd, *New York Times* columnist
Dick Kyle, Bloomberg reporter
David Gregory, NBC News reporter
Bill Sammon, *Washington Times* reporter
Bill O'Reilly, Fox News talk show host, also BIG O

Failure's Reward

BY JONATHAN SHAININ

The past four years have not been an easy time to be an American. We have watched our fellow citizens murdered by the thousands in cold blood within miles of our homes, and we have watched our fellow citizens murder—with only the best of intentions, of course—on the far side of the globe. The twin tragedies of jihadist slaughter in New York and American war on Iraq have marked these years, and these years will rank, unquestionably, among the most difficult in the history of our young nation. Skeptics may counter that our comfortable era hardly bears comparison to the wild bloodshed of earlier wars, the widespread suffering of the Great Depression or the domestic unrest—racial and political—of the Vietnam years. But it is our studied complacency that is most pernicious: while many have mourned, worried and feared, few have suffered, and it has been all too easy for "normal" life to carry on. Absent the clutter and dueling recriminations of a very ugly contest for the presidency of our declining empire, you would be forgiven for waking up one morning in America and walking down the street without any idea that a war was raging six thousand miles away.

A great deal of hope was vested in this presidential election, and it is safe to say that hope has been disappointed. Too much hope, clearly, judging from the outcome. On the left, broadly speaking, the forced smile and uneasy manner of Senator Kerry represented a long hoped-for panacea, a pill that was not always easy to swallow but promised some respite from the wreckage of history piling rapidly at our feet. President Bush, for all his evident failings, is not the sole author of our current woes, but he has—and how!—so reliably, almost compulsively, led us deeper into ruin, confusing conviction and certainty for rectitude, and taken, at every turn, the worse route.

The failings of the Bush presidency will hardly need enumerating, and it would be easy

for any objective observer to weigh the promises and intentions of Mr. Bush against his achievements and find them sorely lacking. The will of the people—ever so pliable in the hands of those with the right tools—has spoken, as Mr. Bush so modestly proclaimed with a sneer in his Thursday press conference. But what sense can we make today of the people's will? Some among us in despair are eager to condemn our rural brethren, who tremble so visibly in fear of terrorists unlikely to strike their towns and gays unlikely to marry in them. On the coasts, many are drowning their sorrows in resentment, confident, to borrow from Brecht, that the problem is not the leaders but the led: would it not be easier, as he wrote in jest, "To dissolve the people / And elect another?"

Already the consensus narrative of this election has formed, ratified by a questionable exit poll suggesting that "moral values" was the most important issue for a narrow plurality of voters, outpacing even "terrorism" and "Iraq." Never mind the ambiguity of "moral values"—which means what, exactly?—and the fact that those concerned with "terrorism" or "Iraq" together dwarf this new Moral Minority. We are told that the god-fearing masses, in numbers heretofore unimaginable, have spoken: the will of the people demands that sodomites shun monogamy and pregnant teenagers deliver their unwanted children into poverty; woe unto those Democrats unwilling in the future to walk with Jesus on the campaign trail.

The power of the culture wars, which have animated our broken politics since the Goldwater era, is their fatal hold on both sides: the right's false piety and preposterous sense of victimhood inflame the contempt and condescension of *bien pensant* elites imagined so vividly by the prophets of the populist backlash and their bitter flock. This cursed election, so clearly in hindsight an unforgivable distraction from our ongoing domestic and foreign troubles, has now writ in stone the conservative movement's

chosen myth of its own rise, in which the hapless opposition is "out of touch" with the values of mainstream America, leaving them easy marks for the fast-talking revival-tent preachers of the new Right. It is not a lonely few on the losing side who have vented their distaste this week for the denizens of "Jesusland," as a popular cartographic joke circulating on Internet now has it. It is only a slight caricature of the postmortem analysis on our team to say that it offers two contrasting strategies: to loathe the yokels, or, to patronize them.

The hopeful among us are looking for ways—or for candidates—to talk the folksy, homespun moral language that might speak to today's Great Reawakened, while the angry—and they are many—vow some kind of war of wills with the red-states, or perhaps to exile themselves until such time as demographic shifts produce a secular coastal majority. If you are reading this right now, in fact, you surely know someone who stated in all seriousness on Wednesday morning that they must leave the country.

I say when they begin to haul the gays by train to the big gas ovens on the Great Plains, we can book our tickets to Paris. It may seem a rotten country, but it is ours too, at least for now, and besides, the very premise of these claims—that a Bush victory requires our exile—gives rather too much credit to the promise of a Kerry administration. If you must leave America because it is a barbaric, immoral empire that tortures its enemies and abuses its own poor—well, then what have you been waiting for?

What is most disturbing about this election is actually less its results than its implications: setting aside the obvious flaws and innumerable errors of the Kerry campaign and its candidate, what we witnessed was the victory of a man whose entire tenure was marked by unceasing failure. In the eyes of its detractors, of course,

Bush's presidency was a failed one from the get-go, but after four years, the pall of incompetence that hung over the White House was not merely a partisan concoction. All of the advantages of incumbency notwithstanding, it seems proper to call Bush's election a come-from-behind triumph worthy of Hollywood, one made all the more improbable by its unparalleled reliance on relentlessly dishonest attacks and its fervent refusal to countenance even the smallest shred of bad news. In the brilliantly played confidence game of the Bush campaign, every setback and misstep, every crippling blow—from the collapse of the World Trade Center to the victories of Iraqi insurgents—was another sign of strength, renewed evidence that Team America was on the march once again.

Our democracy will never be so pure as to penalize with swift justice the failed policies of lackluster incumbents, and our voters never so sharp as to bypass easily falsified vagaries like "character" and "values" as touchstones for electoral judgment. And yet, one cannot help but feel of late we have plumbed new depths: Can any president ever again be held responsible—for anything? If today pundits of all persuasions grovel at the feet of Karl Rove, and they do—some in fear, some in awe—it is because he has shaken from the executive branch the heavy chains of accountability, ruthlessly and without shame. Heaping credit at his feet is all the rage right now—with every tribute eager to forgive Rove his unimaginably vile debasement of our already foul politics—and this column will be no different. A select few have played, jostled, and coerced our rickety democratic pinball machine with equal skill, but Rove and Bush alone have discovered how to pound and shake it impossibly far without tilting. The rest of us? We are still stunned, waiting nervously for their next trick.

Jonathan Shainin is Books Editor at THE INDEPENDENT and Assistant Editor at the New York Review of Books.

All Aboard the Mayflower

BY MARK LOTTO

About whatever happens next, I haven't a clue. I can't tell you if abortion will be outlawed, Iran invaded, or the hems of skirts legally lengthened. I don't know if the President's reelection will do to the Democrats what a certain asteroid did to the dinosaurs, and I don't know if I should double-check where I put my passport.

Some part of me, frankly, will be a little relieved if Bush decimates Social Security and most of Syria. It wouldn't, after all, leave him a ton of time to rewrite the Bill of Rights to look more like Leviticus. But then again, the morning after the election, Bill Bennett wrote, "Now is the time to begin our long, national cultural renewal ('The Great Relearning')—no less in legislation than in federal court appointments. It is, after all, the main reason George W. Bush was reelected." Which is to say: nobody expects the Spanish Inquisition. Or rather: we're fucked.

But it's almost Thanksgiving. The calendar proceeds dutifully toward winter and the war in Iraq, called off and rescheduled on account of the President's reelection bid, will get ugly again along with the weather. With the TV blaring, I wonder why the people of Wyoming, Ohio, and Tennessee feel they are so endangered by terrorists and Iraqis that they will use New Yorkers like bank robbers use hostages, as human shields. I wonder when Democrats will start being more than the always-failing caretakers of Roosevelt and Kennedy. Mostly though, I sit and watch the last leaves falling off the trees and our neighbor's farm emerge sketchily from behind the thin ribbon of woods; I devise detailed lists of all the pies I'll eat a few Thursdays from now. I don't sleep that well.

This seems like an ideal moment to mention that President Bush and I share a direct but very distant ancestor: one John Howland, an honest-to-God, boots-and-buckles, as-

Red-Colony-as-they-came English, then American, Puritan. Howland, it seems, was a bit of a fuck-up, and a bumbler, and history books usually footnote him, if they do at all, for having fallen off the Mayflower. It'd be impossible for me to be fully objective on the topic of his rescue, but I won't fault anyone who wishes Howland had been left in the Atlantic.

Anyway, they threw him a rope and he was saved. And then he survived those first horrible winters on this new continent, nearly-missed, which would have been enough to convince anybody they were elect among the elect. George W. Bush, also a fuck-up, also a bumbler, but on a far bigger scale, has won two elections—something plenty of people have done with far less trouble—and it's convinced him he sits only slightly to the right of You Know Who. Forget the President's mandate: I'm freaked out about the covenant our elected Elect just made with *Passion of the Christ* fans to remake America into what they thought it was always supposed to be. It's a new Mayflower Compact.

It's still a mystery what will happen to the rest of us. This Thanksgiving, at least, we'll be stuck at the kiddie table, jostling elbows. It's not so bad. We're fifty-six million, plus ghosts. And though the phantom visitations will peak around grace, they'll pick up again in time for dessert. Ben Franklin, still staticky, will show us how to be struck by lightning and live; pale funny sherry-eyed Emily Dickinson will trace with her index finger the shotgun hole in Malcolm X's chest, and then whisper something. She will speak just loud enough for it to register, if not necessarily to be heard.

We learn in the retreating. ~

Mark Lotto has been published in the *Nation* and the *New York Observer*, and is contributing editor at THE INDEPENDENT.



31st and Wharton streets, October 2004. Photograph by Zoe Strauss.

ESSAY

Life in a Broken Nation

Stop Fighting For Your Country & Start Fighting Against It

from AMERICA page 1

into their marvelous political equation. The democracy they built was designed to *destroy itself*, and this week it has accomplished just that.

A free man, as the philosophers of the eighteenth century perceived him, could do and say what he pleases, so long as he does not adversely affect his neighbors; a free man may look and think as he likes, so long as he does not cause physical harm to his surroundings. But the American people have had enough of this freedom—and so they have granted it into the hands of Mr. Bush's cabal. Indeed, Mr. Bush is compelled to realize his agenda in the name of 'freedom,' and yet Mr. bin Laden is compelled by the same thing. Each want their people to be free and unharmed, and each is prepared to scorch the earth and enslave their own native dissenters to accomplish it. Such freedom is dubious at best, where it comes at the cost of another's.

George W. Bush is the embodiment of the end of just rule by the people. This is not to say that he was not justly elected—regardless of the means of his ascendance, he represents the last figure to be *freely chosen* by the American electorate, because under his continued administration, we shall cease to be free as the framers defined it. This is because Mr. Bush's handlers and political philosophers believe they know better than the people—as surely as I do. And yet where I know better from the privacy of my den or the quietude of my tower, and harmlessly make my announcements in ink and pencil, the Republican demagogues are determined to exercise their superiority by legislating the behavior of the citizenry. They shall determine what is legal and illegal to say and do; they shall legislate how we are able to take care of ourselves physically and economically; they shall determine where we live and how we die, by pulling the strings of money and manipulating the very material of the natural world. They will do this because the population is stupid, and in their stupidity, the population desires it, and registered this desire, by a great effort of their overweight and overtired persons, in the boobytrapped funhouses that our polling-places have been allowed to become. The population, in a democratic fashion, has chosen to demolish the democratic republic. Jefferson would have had it just the same way—it is the genius of the democratic model after all—though perhaps he would have been more proud to see it last a bit longer. Still, he knew that when an electorate becomes too ill-informed and too weakly-equipped to uphold its duty to itself, it shall earn and it shall receive the government it wants, and the relevance of his constitution would quietly dissolve.

To the portion of us who didn't think it was quite time to destroy our democracy, and who attended the polls hoping to demonstrate at the least our desire to prolong our society's descent into medievalism, this might seem like a horrible tragedy; but we must acknowledge that we are outnumbered by rubes, and that the only way the human race might ever enjoy the fruits of freedom and the pleasure of human enlightenment again is to tear down what is ruined and rebuild it. The mistake we have made to this point is to think that *this election* is so important; to believe that *these four years* might make all the difference. In truth, the demise of our society is much more deep-rooted. George W. Bush is the newest embodiment, the most fully realized embodiment, of this degradation, but he is not a novel monster just come out of the void. The majority of the citizens of this country are not *capable* of liberty. We reside today in *their* country.

And so four-year terms are not the units of history. History is slow and grand and great, and we are victimized by our own impatience in believing it can be steered around a bend as sharp as one single November. We must recognize the arcs of human history for the large sweeping cycles that they are, and know that ever since the Founding Fathers established our society by the light of European intellectual development, the cycle of history has been swinging away in the opposite direction.

Perhaps we have come to the apogee of human enlightenment in the superstitious reign of Junior Bush; or perhaps we are doomed to go still further. Regardless, we ought to look and realize that the change we seek is one that will only come over the course of generations, of centuries, through the birth and death of nations and the rise and fall of great ideas. In the near term we shall lose our liberty, we shall be robbed of our human rights, and we shall see our nation turned into a kingdom of misguided divinity. We have little choice, as individuals, but to stop fighting for it, and begin fighting against it. For it is no longer a democracy, it is no longer the seat of freedom. America is the world's most dangerous nest of superstition and religious intolerance; the most sharp-fanged enemy to true intellectual and personal liberty; and the most seductive chimera of opportunity and promise. This country is not any longer Jefferson's noble resurrection of Athens; it is the modern Saudi Arabia of Christendom, the refuge of crusaders and bigots and fearmongers.

Until now, we have been content or deluded in believing that our democracy was intact, and that in spite of its flaws, it was a self-healing mechanism. Imagine what you might be feeling today in a land governed by the Senator from Massachusetts. Is everything better? Is the urgency gone? Is the crisis passed, and the world, astonishingly, recovered? You might likely feel these sensations, but of course you would be perfectly deluded to the reality. Our society and our system are maimed by our sloth, our intellectual impotence, and our lack of concern or sympathy. And the only mechanism built into our system of governance to repair it under such conditions is not a healing one, but a self-destructive one. All that remains in our country of Jeffersonian democracy and Enlightenment secularism is the memory of the ideal, and it is *this* that we are charged with carrying forth and planting anew; it is this that those of us who know better, or know *other*, are obliged to give our lives to. The pendulum of history does not brush us briefly in our youth—it collides with us and demolishes our tranquility, and forces us to dedicate our whole existence to it. If you perhaps thought a few months of activism would straighten out the world, you have this week met the truth of the profundity of the human dilemma. We are a century from the nearest conceivable renaissance of reason and humanism, and in proportion to our own anemia, its date of arrival outstrips us.

Our pride or our optimism or our slumbering reason has until now prevented us from realizing that we reside in an utterly dark age and in the land from which that darkness emanates. Science and reason and sense are nearly vanished from our society, and the great majority desire to be ruled by fear of the supernatural, ignorance, intolerance, and blindness. The majority of our countrymen are content to wage war for its own sake, they are content to annihilate populations unlike their own, they are content to be relieved of the responsibility for being human. They are content to lean back and let a mysterious, wrathful God govern their fate, and to dictate what is right and wrong. They are content, in short, to give away their liberty and become slaves of idiotic ideology, and in so doing to abandon the legacy of their country's founders. The United States is only the same nation it was in name; but it is not that country of hope and opportunity and possibility and absolute human freedom anymore. And it has not been this for some time—the great gift Mr. Bush might have given to us in his victory is a clear, long overdue picture of our country as the unlikely enemy of true human freedom. The last thing our democracy was ever meant to do was bring the hammer down upon itself. There the shards of our enlightened society will lay until enough members of an enlightened generation can be summoned to rebuild it. Until then, those of us who know better have nothing to do but to fight that shadowy thing that now stands in our old nation's place. ~

Alexander Swartwout edited *Three Weeks*, a newspaper in Queens, New York.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Submit writing on this newspaper generally, or anything herein, or anything elsewhere. Send your letter for publication to letters@philadelphiaindependent.net or THE PHILADELPHIA INDEPENDENT, Bureau of Letters, 1026 Arch Street, Philadelphia, Penna 19107.

COULDN'T BEAR TO WATCH

DEAR EDITORS:

Wednesday morning I awoke to go off to work, hoping for good news, having fallen asleep before knowing any official ruling. I hadn't watched because of my own paranoia. You see, anytime I have ever watched anything, sporting event or otherwise, and chosen a side, they always lose. Yes, sports fans, it's all my fault.

So Wednesday morning I had hope, and within fifteen minutes I found it smashed by newspaper headlines. Then, like a snake handler speaking in tongues, I just started shouting: Fuck! Motherfuck, what the, are you kidding? I didn't watch—how—why—son of a—Jesus—why—ignorant redneck fucks—goddamn—motherfucking, cocksucking, Fox news-watching fucks! Jesus Christ! Why goddamn it, why? Do you just not know or just not care? Christ. How do you sleep? Aw, fuck it. No! Fuck it, people are fucked, fuck! Why—fuck!

Then, looking at the red and blue map and finding my home state red, I called my Gramma, because she was the only family member I was positive would be up and home. I also knew how she voted, because we had talked about it. Already knowing her answer, I asked anyway: Why?

Her answer: "He's a strong leader and he's best for America."

To which I replied: "But he's a monkey fucking idiot!"

Then I apologized for swearing, told her I loved her, and hung up. Finally I looked up to the sky, asked why, then proclaimed my home state of Indiana, which I love, mind you, dead to me.

JAKE HENRY
Philadelphia

OUR LAST HOPE?

DEAR EDITORS:

On November 3, my ninth-grade social studies class was asked to respond to the outcome of the election. This is what I wrote:

I think I'm going to be sick. I told myself that if Bush won, the next day I would feel lost. But when I woke up today I felt no hope, and I was afraid to turn on the television.

I have many reasons. But so do Bush supporters. But I don't base my beliefs on what my mother thinks.

Stem cell research. Stem cell research is what they are studying to find a cure for diabetes. I have diabetes.

Health care. For those Americans like myself who spend thousands of dollars that we can't afford on meds and supplies. For the fact that insurance companies denied me because I am a diabetic.

I am 100 percent pro-choice. I know that if you are stupid enough to get knocked up, that

you should have to deal with it. But you have the right to choose. And if you take away that right, women will have to resort to throwing themselves down stairs and using coat hangers. And teenage lives will be ruined over one small mistake.

Gays should be allowed to get married[...]

I don't want my country to be run by (excuse my bluntness) a close-minded, ignorant, cowboy jackass. It's his fault that people look at Muslims—that people look at my family—like they are our enemies. People of America see Arabs and they think: terrorist. I know, first hand, that that's not even close to being true. And now my family is in danger because of this war that was *never* meant to happen.

I wish Kerry wouldn't give up. He's our last hope. I just wish I could do something instead of sitting around and watching our country go to hell.

JESS ALDEGHI
Rosmont, Pa.

IT TAKES A NATION OF MILLIONS

DEAR EDITORS:

When the U.S. attacked Iraq on March 20, 2003, I thought: what we're witnessing is not the fall of Iraq, but of America... This country has often been hypocritical, but never so shameless. The tower was coming down. And yet, on November 2, 2004, I went to the poll at seven in the morning filled with optimism: things will be different tomorrow. It is interesting to note that Bush was most favored by white men, least popular among blacks, who voted against him ten to one. Forced to bear the brunt of every bad national policy, blacks knew an evil president when they saw one. If only more of us had their insight that day.

LINH DINH
Philadelphia

NEWS FROM OHIO & A PRAYER

DEAR EDITORS:

I am not satisfied in the least with the outcome of the election. I've been a part of one of the largest movements of civic responsibility that has happened in this nation, still I'm an not satisfied.

Kerry's premature concession speech may have restored belief in our electoral process, but it robbed me of a significant avenue to protest Bush's reelection. There are still voting issues to be raised, especially in the election-determining state of Ohio. On election day I spoke with a friend in Columbus. He explained to me that his district was only given two voting booths, as opposed to the district next him, which had five; he waited two hours to vote while the average wait in the two surrounding (and richer) districts were mere minutes. He also explained to me how his district's waiting

period may have discouraged some voters who needed to get to work. I wasn't too surprised by that story, but I was surprised when he told me that voters wearing Vote or Die T-shirts were turned away. This pissed me off because there was no active news coverage of what was going on in the swing states—coverage that was much needed this year.

While some of us voted with our hearts, many of us voted with our minds on the future. As for the reds, most of them voted with their hearts. I'm not sure what to think of all this. All I know is that history doesn't tell us much except that lies are meant to fail us and hearts are meant to touch. On that note, I pray that God blesses our hearts and doesn't let the future of this nation fail by the lies that dictate it.

HANIF O'NEIL
Philadelphia

ON THE ENERGY CRISIS

DEAR EDITORS:

Reducing pollution, an energy plan that looked to renewable resources, wilderness protection and improved fuel economy standards. These were the causes that John Kerry had fought for in the Senate and would have continued to promote as president. Environmental protection and regulation would have improved our nation's health and boosted our economy.

But instead of feeling helpless and waiting another four years for change, I want to reach out to others and encourage them to make a change in their daily choices. There are options for all Americans at local levels, like using clean energy, reducing our waste stream, and supporting sustainable businesses. Campaigning for Kerry made me realize how important it is to educate and mobilize Americans. Civil democracy can make a difference in our community and together we can create a sustainable model for the rest of the nation.

The day after the election, I started a website called www.sustainPA.org. I want to build this site into resource of sustainable practices for local residents that can eventually be exported to the rest of the nation. A new energy revolution and a reassessment of our impact on the environment will be necessary to offset the damage that will continue under President Bush. Please visit www.sustainpa.org or contact me directly at aryon@sustainpa.org.

ARYON HOSEL
Philadelphia

HIS FATHER'S SON

DEAR AMERICA:

Thanks a lot, you ignorant redneck motherfuckers. I hope you're waking up today, feeling proud, breathing deep, and congratulating yourselves. You should know that the rest of us don't feel like we're part of your country anymore, but I guess good luck with the new cru-

sades, anyway. There's right, and then there's right, and it's going to be a long time before we see anything resembling either.

I guess the only conclusion we can draw from this is that you are stupid, scared, and mean. Was it September 11 that did this? You're so worried about your own asses, and so hellbent for revenge, that killing 100,000 people, even when their country had nothing to do with it, is acceptable? I feel like I'm going to throw up. The last four years have been like a bad dream, so what does that make the next four? Look out Syria and Iran, because you're next.

The poor people of Iraq. You seem so surprised that they "resist us," America. You say, "Why do they hate us?" Gee. Could it be because you are bombing and killing them? Could it be because you break into their houses, kidnap them, and torture them? I'm a little skeptical of the higher ground you're perched on, America. I suppose if people dropped "the mother of all bombs" on your grandmother's house, and roamed the streets in tanks, you'd greet them by waving the flags of *their* country. Jesus Christ.

Maybe now that your man George doesn't have to worry about being reelected, he'll drop the whole cowboy routine. Won't you be shocked when you find out that he's really not the kind of guy you want to barbecue with! Wait... he's not a cowboy? Wait... he's an elitist asshole millionaire frat boy born with a silver spoon up his ass? No, you're right, sorry, didn't want to spoil your illusion. He's just a good old boy, and he has no business ties with the Saudi royal family whatsoever. That would be a little questionable, wouldn't it? You should ask him about that, but he won't answer, because he's with Kenny Lay, and they're too busy jerking off into their money.


Well America, you've probably noticed it didn't take very long for my depression to turn into anger. Yeah, it has, and fuck you. You've probably noticed that the people who actually live anywhere near what could actually be considered a terror target didn't vote for George. What do they know that you don't? Well, you're the ones that should be afraid, because you're probably right. *They're coming for you.* They're going to bomb the Wal-Mart down the street from you, they're going to behead all the young white grade school teachers in Bumfuck, U.S.A....

Maybe you're right. Wouldn't that be a kick? When the locusts come, and the three-foot wave of blood washes over Jerusalem, thank God we'll all be on the same side as George. And by George, of course, I mean Jesus, the Son of God.

Yours in anticipation of the rapture,
Sincerely,


DIRK WOOD, Portland, Oregon
dirkw@darkhorse.com

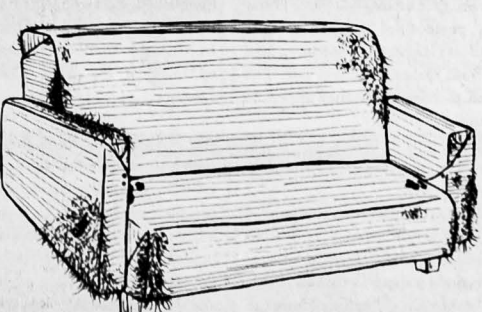
P.S. I'm not mad at you, Dad. At least we live in the same state, so I cancelled out your vote.



MUNDANE

BY JOEL HOLLAND





FOUR MORE FUCKING YEARS.

NATIONAL REPORT

UP CLOSE & INVISIBLE

The United States Government is a Hard One to Know

BY PAUL MALISZEWSKI

I moved to Washington, D.C., a little over a year ago. I work as a teacher and a sometime-ghostwriter. I had thought, before living here, that I would feel near to power, and that being in its proximity, I would naturally come to understand it better. I had thought I'd work as a dogged freelancer. I fancied that I'd devote countless enjoyable hours to digging up forgotten or overlooked government documents, discovering the truth in the National Archives and the Library of Congress, there all along, in the public domain.

I spent my optimism, such as it was, within the first few weeks. The proximity, which I'd construed as an opportunity to write was in fact only daunting, a reason to read more before even thinking about writing. Proximity produced complexity—maddening complexity—and I struggled even for an analogy capacious enough to convey what I observed. Was government the old elephant attended to by blind men—they were journalists in my analogy—who mistook its tail, its skin, its feet, and its trunk for different creatures, drawing divergent conclusions based on their limited experience? In part, it was, I guessed.

But government was like a mural, too, which told a sprawling tale with many threads and thousands of characters. Each thread was compelling and full of life, each a story in itself, but no thread could even begin to reflect the whole, let alone capture any of the complexity. Metonymy was but a cruel joke, easy enough to contrive and so alluring, but never that accurate. And yet to tell the whole story, to address the mural in its entirety, was to wallow in generality, broad strokes, statistics.

And meanwhile, wasn't government also something like Kafka's parable of the law, which he described as an endless series of gates and gatekeepers? Approaching one gate and gaining passage gave one a vertiginous feeling of being inside, having access, and yet there was—and would always be—another inside, a place of greater inside-ness, before which stands an even larger guard, a more imposing, better armed gatekeeper, who will not permit entry to just anyone.

For several weeks, I struggled with the problem of an analogy, modifying the old elephant into, at one low moment, a massive translucent blob, weighing thousands of tons and filled with jelly that had this ability, a power, I guess, to mimic other animals. Next, I made my mural a painting with nested levels of figures and details, in which an individual brushstroke was as intriguing and worthy of consideration as its overall composition. I struggled with these analogies, I say, playing with them, until I recognized, finally, that it was just play, a game of pulling clever comparisons from the air. The game itself was an analogy for something else. I had the sense that I was merely dancing with shadows in order to avoid having to face squarely the fire behind me all along. That was another analogy, one just as bad and no more exact. Perhaps writing articles about the government was as futile as tossing

finely crafted teapots into an approaching hurricane. I still tried it, of course. I still wrote. I made my teapots, and I painted them prettily, but I was increasingly frustrated by their lack of effect. The teapots ended up either crushed, laying in pieces at my feet, or else they ended up ignored, resting in glass vitrines inside a museum no one cared to attend.

Once, on a Sunday afternoon, at a restaurant in my neighborhood, I overheard a man telling two women he was having brunch with all about the government. The man was in his twenties, out of college but just barely, and I remember he said, "I have several qualms about the current federal tax code...." He went on to enumerate those qualms—as I recall, there were three or four—and the women nodded along and listened.

Another time, on the Metro, I overheard an old man talking to his friend. I got on the train at the Foggy Bottom stop and was heading home from teaching. The men boarded later, at Metro Center. Said the old man, "I have to say that I took great umbrage with..." I lost the line of argument there, so caught up was I in hearing the word "umbrage" used in conversation.

My girlfriend has discussed the war in Iraq with a contractor who's doing some work on our kitchen. And she has held forth with the local pharmacist and the cashier, who were both interested to hear her thoughts on why Senator John Edwards failed to carry for the Democrats North Carolina, his home state, and South Carolina, where he was born. She was wearing a Duke University sweatshirt at the time, so they suspected she had reason to know. Together the three of them reconsidered Senator John Kerry's choice of vice presidential candidates, but after some deliberation could come up with none better than Edwards. "Lieberman," the cashier pointed out, "might as well be a Republican."

I have, I am afraid, nothing original to write with regard to what happened during the most recent presidential election and what went wrong and now what the future four years will bring. I can improvise expertise, dilating with seeming knowledge about national population demographics moving to the geographic south and the ideological right. I, too, have qualms, after all. And I, too, can take umbrage. I can, for example, suppose almost endlessly about the seeming hopelessness of matching a senator up against a former governor. The governor will almost always win—it's like paper covering rock—because the senator has a clear record of national achievements and failures, while the governor has only managerial know-how to advertise and a blank slate, his beliefs made to order, tailored to suit the new occasion. And I can bemoan the sad state of a country in which a life led in public may appear as a liability, requiring endless justifications and mincing explanations, pained apologies offered for service, whereas the life led in private, for personal gain, earns only envy and admiration. The millions served bow to the millions earned.

Building Blocs One Home at a Time

BY CHRIS WHITE

How do you get millions of people to do something at the same time? Those who are able to do so control the world. They might use money or arms or threats, but in the end we all eat and sleep and live because a series of tasks are performed each day by a series of people. This is based not on reason or morality, but the relationships we have with each other.

As a union organizer, my job is to visit a certain segment of people in their homes and convince them to reorganize their relationships for their mutual benefit. Visiting someone at home and having a one on one conversation with him or her continues to be the most effective form of communication. You can contact large numbers of people through the media or the Internet or by leafleting, but you're only going to pick up a handful of the people you're sending it to. When the speed of communication increases, the quality of communication always decreases. I'm dismayed and embarrassed that I have messed around with activism for a decade and have only begun to do housevisits in the last few years.

The ideal housevisit lasts about twenty minutes to half an hour. In that time, the effective visitor spends about eighty percent of the time listening and twenty percent of

the time talking. The talking I do in a housevisit is divided between asking questions and agitating. Asking questions forces the visited to finish their thoughts and fill in all the details. Agitation is getting people to feel their anger and take a step towards doing something about it. The visitor asks questions about the person's entire life in order to be able to connect what the visited person cares about to what I'm agitating the visited person to do.

For example, you visit someone at home. They tell you it's hard for them to get to the polls, because they can't afford treatment for their diabetes and it makes it hard for them to walk. You get them to connect to their anger over their lack of healthcare. Their anger motivates them to vote. You drive him to the polls.

Put down this paper right now. Walk outside and begin having one on one conversations with everyone on your block. What's their self-interest? What do they want out of your neighborhood? Your town? Your country? If they voted for somebody, what did they want that candidate to do? Do they still want it done? What are they ready to do to make it happen?

Chris White has written for *Cometbus* and *the Defenestrator*.

But the truth is that I know so little about so many things—and, what's worse, so much about a few things that nobody much cares about, like contemporary literary fiction or the history of satire or hoaxes and fakes, that writing about the government and specifically about our present situation must necessarily give me pause.

Years ago, after graduate school, I worked as a writer and editor at a company that published economic forecasts and reports about more than one hundred countries. Within a couple of weeks of starting work there, the managing editor placed me in charge of the Bangladesh report, which had last been published almost a year before and so required updating. I schooled myself on Bangladesh. I read articles from *The Economist*, when I could find them, and *The Financial Times*, when I could get through them. Mostly I monitored the wires, watching the AP and CNN for new dispatches on the country's political situation. An election loomed, the political parties jockeyed for attention and a coalition that might rule. I read the CIA's background report and imposing compilations of World Bank statistics: Life expectancy, infant mortality, literacy and average education levels, yearly income. By the end of my first week of working on Bangladesh—we referred to the reports as the countries, as if our report was interchangeable with the country, the analogy a convincing substitute for the object of study—I felt I was acquainted with the major issues that the country faced. By the end of the second week, I fooled myself into thinking I knew what I was talking about. The third week of study found me feeling ready to make predictions about this or that party and the fate and future of this or that political actor. We called them actors, as if the entire country

were a play, a piece of theater performed for our benefit.

With my hastily cobbled-together education to guide me, I updated Bangladesh and then turned it in. As I waited to hear back from the managing editor, I continued to read any new articles that came in. I felt a curious obligation, mostly to the report and making sure it was as correct and up-to-date as I could manage, but also to the country, which I felt deserved such attention, never mind that I hadn't thought much about it at all before starting work. It was a bit like following a soap opera, the action wasn't gripping—GDP projections never are—but I didn't want to miss any developments.

But gradually, I let my reading slide. I forgot Bangladesh. Its political parties blended in my mind with other countries'. The three- or four-letter abbreviations seemed interchangeable, all too easy to confuse. It was around that time, as Bangladesh faded in my memory, growing less and less distinct, like a birthday party several years back or an old story worn down to its bare outline and a couple of main characters, that the managing editor gave me my next big assignment: he needed me to update the United States.

I couldn't have been happier. I knew something of the United States, after all. I said, "That shouldn't be too hard. I'll get right to work on it."

The managing editor warned me though that the United States in fact was the hardest report of all, and he was right. I knew too much, most of it useless, and what's more, I couldn't so easily fool myself into believing I ever grasped the story whole.

Paul Maliszewski's writing has appeared in *Harper's*, *Granta*, *the Paris Review* and other magazines.

OPINION

AGAINST OHIO

Blind Buckeye State Makes a New Yorker See Red

BY DAVID HASKELL

Fuck Ohio. Fuck the 2.8 million citizens who made that state red, and fuck everyone who couldn't summon the effort to vote, 136,483 of whom could have sent George W. Bush back to Texas. As for everyone in Ohio who voted for John Kerry, thank you from the bottom of my heart. But if you look deep within and discover that you didn't do enough to persuade your office colleagues, college buddies and church congregations to vote, then fuck you, too.

Some say that moral values mattered more in this election than jobs, healthcare, the war in Iraq and our response to the threat of terrorism. As a gay 25-year-old who lives in New York City and believes himself to be a man of good morals, I find myself wondering for the first time if I'm an American. I look at the two men who ran for president and the campaigns they spearheaded, and I can't help but find that one of them represents a country that bares no resemblance to the America I know.

Obsessed with winning the War on Terror, George W. Bush has proven well adept at making his America terrified. Terrified that Hollywood movies exert more influence on our children than Sunday services. Terrified that the institution of marriage will crumble in the face of committed homosexuals. Terrified that reaching out to our allies will be perceived as a sign of weakness. Terrified that the "elite media"

will brainwash us into becoming an honorary member of the European Union. Terror motivated the votes of more Ohioans than self-interest, and as a result, a state where job figures dropped, healthcare costs rose and the number of uninsured citizens skyrocketed has opted for more of the same. Red America is on Red Alert.

Well, Ohio, I give up. Here in the capitol of Blue America, I'm going to be just fine. I have no student loans, and in four years, I bet I'll be taking advantage of the newest round of Bush tax cuts. I'm not worried about health insurance because I already have mine. I have no need for prescription drugs from Canada because I'm not sick. My job won't be outsourced because I was trained well enough to compete in a global economy. I'm not fighting in Iraq because even if I wanted to, the Army wouldn't let me. I barely notice gasoline prices because I don't own a car. And over the next four years, as the deficit, interest rates, prescription drug costs, unemployment rolls, gas prices and death tolls rise, my boyfriend and I will remain relatively unaffected, content to watch characters come out on prime time television. Red Alert America may have won another four years in the White House, but they remain terrified. How long will it be until the OC's Seth puts the moves on Ryan?

David Haskell is editor-in-chief of *Topic* magazine. He can be contacted at David.Haskell@topicmag.com.

Organizing in Swing States

from INTERVIEWS page 1

tinct and opposing on the war, the outsourcing of jobs, stem cell research, and exit plans out of Iraq. There were clear issues and people were motivated to take sides and vote.

AC: Bush won a significant chunk of votes from minorities and young people, groups who have traditionally voted with the Democrats; any thoughts on why?

WR: On all sides, fear motivated people to vote. Some young people I talked to were petrified of the draft, petrified that there will be no jobs and so they voted for Kerry. Fear of terrorism though, brought out other people to vote for Bush. A huge number of people from war-torn places—a lot of Nicaraguans and Cubans—support him because he represents security. I think the Democrats could learn from W. about appealing to a base. Democrats need to bring back their traditional base. Thirty to thirty-five percent of Hispanics vote Republican and it's because of security and family values. Bush makes them feel safe. The Democrats need to revisit how they appeal to church communities.

AC: What's your biggest gripe with the electoral system as it is now?

WR: We need to get every vote to count. I work in the jails and I see that work needs to be done to institutionalize the electoral process within the corrections system, so that all people with the right to vote can get ballots in time to be counted. We need to fight the Board of Elections until they put the resources in.

Carol Belin directs the Jeannette Rankin Peace

Center in Missoula, Montana, a non-profit named for and founded by the first woman ever elected to Congress. This year, Montana elected Brian Schweitzer to be its first Democratic governor since 1988.

Ariella Cohen: What do you think the election of Schweitzer says about the future of the left in Montana?

Carol Belin: Montana has always been a rural, gun-toting Republican state. At the same time, there is also a history of progressive populism. Both of these are rooted in the state's remoteness, which keeps us at the bottom of the heap economically. Companies don't want to base themselves in Montana because of the shipping and transport costs, so there is relatively little corporate business. Most years we're the poorest or second-poorest state in the union, and we only have one congressional representative in the House. People here will vote for the best-established, best-connected candidate because they know that will bring benefits to the state. In Montana, that means Republicans are elected most of the time. This time it was a Democrat.

AC: Why do you think the West has become such a stronghold for the Republicans?

CB: Rugged individualism began with a very progressive bent, but it always had to do with self-determination and industry. The populist period was in the late 1800s, fueled by the growth of the railroad and mining industries, and their unions, like the International Workers of the World. For a time, it even spilled over into the farming communities, but by World War II the corporate control of farms and consolidation of the land had killed that

movement. In the 1970s there was a bit of a renaissance but economically, as things declined, the interests of the people who were buying up the land became more conservative. Historically, self-reliance is progressive. Now it appears in the form of pushes for a Constitutional amendment to protect hunting and fishing. A candidate's position on guns can determine whether he wins or loses an election.

AC: How can we improve the electoral system? CB: We should do away with the electoral college and move away from a system where the winner takes all. On a federal level, there is no representation for half of the population. Proportional representation would be a better system.

This year, Field Director Kelley Weigel worked with Western State Center, a progressive leadership training organization, to get out the vote in Portland's low-income communities.

Ariella Cohen: Why do you think Kerry took Oregon?

Kelley Weigel: The economy was one reason. Another factor was the huge number of new voters, many of whom came from low-income communities. In Oregon, everyone votes by absentee ballot and advance registration isn't required, so we didn't have to deal with any provisional ballots. The mail system makes it easier for people, especially first time voters, to vote.

AC: How is it easier?

KW: It's less trouble for people without a car or access to a polling place. Also, people have three weeks between the time they receive the ballot and when it is due back to the Board of Elections so they have some time to figure out the ballot, call the BOE with questions, and fix any problems.

AC: Would you recommend that other states adopt the vote-by-mail process?

KW: Absolutely. And if they don't switch to the mail-system, all states could benefit from improving access to absentee ballots.

Molly Weiser, lawyer and executive director of the Racial Fairness Project, worked to improve voter registration and ballot access in Ohio jails. She is based in Cleveland.

Ariella Cohen: What's your next project now that the election is over?

Molly Weiser: I've recently realized that people in Ohio jails have a statutory right to have a ballot personally delivered to them, as opposed to receiving the ballot through the mail. My next step is to litigate the issue using that provisional code and argue that two representatives from the Board of Elections, one Democrat and one Republican, should come to the jail, like they come to other public places, and deliver ballots to the inmates. Unless someone wants to argue that the jail is not a public or private institution, people have a right to hand-delivered ballots.

AC: How many inmates did you and your volunteer staff register for this election?

MW: I don't have exact numbers but we did face-to-face voter registration and absentee ballot collection in ten jails and the corrections officers collected absentee ballots in twenty more.

AC: How did the corrections officers respond to the voter drive?

MW: People came to it from all kinds of positions. There are ninety-two jails in Ohio, some of them said, literally, "fuck you." Other people never returned our phone calls and about thirty permitted us to distribute the registration materials, or did it for us.

AC: If you could transform one step of the electoral process, which would you choose?

MW: I am a real opponent of prior-day registration. Same-day registration makes it so

On Voting From China

BY M.F. CAPPIELLO

SHANGHAI, China—Not wanting to receive my ballot too late, in September I sent my request to Indiana by priority mail (cost: \$4.83), which turned out to be wasted, because the state doesn't send out absentee ballots until the first of October. I could have used regular mail. But when my ballot hadn't arrived by mid-October, I downloaded an official write-in ballot from the Internet. I was unable to walk at the time so I couldn't go to the embassy to hand in the form, and I didn't own a fax machine. But with the help of my students, I mailed the form express (cost:

\$22.52). Then, on October 25, the Federal Voter Assistance Program issued a new official ballot, which made my previously official ballot invalid. I'd have to vote again. So I downloaded the newest official ballot, filled it in, and mailed it Fed Ex. Mercifully, the mailing was free, but the cab ride wasn't (cost: \$6.00).

When all was said and done, exercising my democratic rights from my post abroad set me back \$33.35 or 276 Chinese renminbi, about the cost of two weeks rent at my old apartment.

much easier for people to exercise their right to vote. We need to make it as open and accessible a process as possible.

As director of United Vision for Idaho, Roger Sherman works to build a democratic, grassroots movement in Boise.

Ariella Cohen: What did you learn from this election?

Roger Sherman: What we saw is that the strongest grassroots campaigns won.

AC: Is that why Republicans consistently win Idaho?

RS: It's a big reason. Now we are working towards training progressive candidates to run really strong field operations, the way the Republicans have always done. In Idaho, the powerful grassroots actions come out of the church, but recently the Democrats have picked up senate seats using strong door-knocking grassroots campaigns.

AC: Can you give an example of how grassroots

campaigns work for Republicans in Idaho? RS: The pro-life movement, which is a kind of quintessential popular movement in Idaho, took down a Democratic congressman named Alan Anderson in this election. The guy is a Mormon who happened to vote against one anti-choice measure. To call him pro-choice would be a stretch, but still, a vote was mobilized against him on the abortion issue.

AC: Was there any talk of fraud or voter disenfranchisement in Idaho?

RS: Our same-day registration policy eliminates a lot of those problems. Turnout is our big problem now. Six states in the nation have same-day registration and that's great, but we need to take more advantage of it. We need to make voting part of our year-round campaigns so that we don't have all this last minute hustling to get people to the polls. Voter activity has to be tied to other grassroots activities; it needs to be part of our everyday lives.

Ariella Cohen can be contacted at ariella@enrump.net.

From Our Readers

After the dispiriting result of this month's election, we were heartened that so many of you responded to our open call for submissions. Unfortunately, the amount of newsprint we had to work with prevented us from printing every submission we received. Here are excerpts from some of our favorite submissions that we weren't able to print in full:

Coming home, I passed a neighbor's window that yesterday had a Kerry sign in it. The sign had been turned around and in black marker were written the words, "Shame On You America."

—DITTA BARON HOEBER, Philadelphia

Yesterday, nearly one million of my fellow Oregonians agreed that my wife and I are second-class citizens underserving of over 1,000 rights that heterosexual married couples take for granted. I can't even begin to express how I feel... friends and family have tried to comfort me, kindness that brings me to tears. Knowing that they are trying to understand my pain and sadness helps. As does the fact that over 700,000 people voted against Measure 36. But it is still not enough to stop my tears.

—JESSICA MITCHELL, Portland, Ore.

My mind wanders to the late great tap-dancer Gregory Hines in *The Cotton Club*, where he plays a simple nightclub entertainer faced with the chaos of gang warfare, feeling helpless to make an effective—read violent—impact. Eventually he concludes that it's not loser talk to say that he'll fight with his tap shoes. He'll dance like a fucking warlord. By hard work and grace we'll evolve. That's my new hope, because in that upwardly-mobile process, in spite of all obstacles and defeats, even unto death, you can only win. Excellence is the best revenge. I still believe that.

—CLARK ROTH, Philadelphia

At noon on November 2, the dining room of the Famous Fourth Street Deli, a traditional Election Day lunch spot for politicians, was filled with power brokers lining up for bagels, lox and political kibitzing. Outside, a large tour bus was blasting hip-hop. Inside, Russell Simmons was talking up his Hip-Hop Action Summit, a nationwide get out the vote effort. "The hip-hop community is the best branding community in America," said Simmons. "When the hip-hop community chooses something, America chooses it. The hip-hop community chose voting, because young people want their voices heard. Look at the turnout so far today. America has chosen to vote." Everywhere I went, in the Barrio, in black neighborhoods, in Center City, in South Philly, the voters were out in droves. Anthony Ringgold, 21 and his friend, George Slaughter, 35, were in standing in line among seniors in wheel chairs at the Stephen Smith Home for the Aged on Belmont Avenue in West Philadelphia. Ringgold said he'd had enough of Bush. "He's fucked up," said Ringgold. "Time for a change." Slaughter agreed, adding that there is such urgency among young blacks "that even my little brother and his corner boys, you know, street pharmacists, are getting off the corner to vote." So much for high hopes.

—HOWARD ALTMAN, Philadelphia

I will never be okay with the events of the past thirty-six hours, but perhaps I am coming to a place where I don't have to blame myself and I don't have to feel entirely hopeless... my plan is to try and make a little bit of progress every day, for the next four years, for however long it takes, until we break the shell of inhumanity and perversity that's covered our country.

—MEG BUZZI, Columbus, Oh.

I accuse the leadership of the Democratic Party with negligence; with misrepresenting the ideals of the party; with malfeasance; of moral bankruptcy; of exchanging charisma for conviction; of a failure of imagination; of a deep suspicion of its constituency; of cynicism and apathy; of a willful estrangement from the working class; of betraying the party's legacy; and of complicity in the party's recent losses, all of which culminate in a violation of the party's legitimacy as our representatives in government. Our recent defeat warrants both considerable discussion of and quiet reflection on what it means to be a democrat in the United States of America today, and how it relates to the future of our party.

—J. TODD RAMSAY, Philadelphia

What the politicians want from us is not to "heal," but to "heel." Like subservient pets, we're supposed to be quiet, walk behind them, and continue to

obey their commands without question. I don't want to obey. I don't want to agree with this President's immoral war. I don't want to quietly accept the unnecessary deaths and maiming of our good young men and women and innocent Iraqi children. I don't want to be forced to stand in a "Free Speech Zone" to disagree—about anything. I want to protest wherever and however I can. It used to be a right under the First Amendment in the pre-Bush and Ashcroft era. I want to dissent even more fiercely and disagree more loudly than before. My voice still isn't being heard in Washington. I want my civil rights—I want your civil rights—returned.

—ROSEMARY R. BRASCH, Bloomsburg, Pa.

I have never felt such a feeling of dread. I woke up yesterday and immediately had a panic attack. I woke up this morning, and there it was again. I can't believe that the majority of Americans think George Bush is the better man.

—PATRICIA NIMS, Fort Mill, S.C.

Clearly, the nation has spoken. Here's what they said: "We don't care about anyone but ourselves. More unemployment is fine with us. Diplomacy is no longer relevant to foreign policy. Health care is a privilege, not a right." Those opposed to this regime will wait patiently for a new light of leadership to break, but as our patience wears thin, we may be forced to light a fire under ourselves.

—JOSHUA H. NIMS, Philadelphia

During the campaign, Bush and Kerry both suffered from the political need to lie, but their lies were of a different type. Bush supporters wanted badly to see the truth in their candidate's lies—that Iraq was going well, that the tax cuts were working, and that his policies stood on moral principle. On the other hand, those who supported Kerry subsisted on a private reserve of confidence that their candidate was in fact lying. When Kerry said marriage was between a man and a woman, they trusted he didn't believe it. When speaking about how religious faith informed his goals in public policy, they hoped that time would prove otherwise. More to the point, Bush lied to promote an ideology he believed in, while Kerry lied to obfuscate an ideology he either lacked or was embarrassed by.

—GEORGE BALGOBIN, Philadelphia

The absence of cosmopolitan, networking public intellectuals may actually contribute to the isolation of smaller, localized groups cut off from other ideas and influences. Interactive dialogue is key to any movement forward from where we are now. We cannot abandon cosmopolitanism for a new form of medievalism; we cannot disengage from the geopolitical level.

—PETER SCHWARZ, Philadelphia

Hey, Village Idiot and all your fellow theocrats and neocons, hear me now. We'll be back and we'll be stronger and better organized and even hungrier and madder and more focused and more disgusted and we will take this country back with all its marvelous potential and we will ultimately prevail.

—WENDY FORMAN

I am 26 years old, and by the time Bush is out of the White House I will be 30. I fear for what the world will look like then, and yet I feel it is my responsibility to continue to care about what happens in America and the rest of the world.

—SKYE PARROTT, Paris, France

How do voters make their decisions? Are they aware of how this administration lied and cheated and used fear to manipulate us? Are they aware of what lies ahead? As Shakespeare wrote, "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves, that we are underlings."

—JOHN OLIVER MASON

I am a mother. It's up to me to explain this to my kids. My 8 year-old stayed up all night watching the returns with her dad. She climbed into bed this morning to ask who won. I told her we didn't know but it looked like Bush and she was sad, she was angry. I'm going to teach her to use it.

—LAUREN EICHELBERGER, Baltimore, Md.

DISPATCH

BUSH 2000, KERRY 2004

The Story of My Conversion

BY JESSICA CLAIR

I voted for Bush in 2000. I'm not proud of it and it's been highly classified until now, but I'm learning that mistakes are okay and admitting them is good therapy. In 2000, I was 23 years old, married to a Dupont chemist, and living in a white, middle class Delaware suburb. My parents and religious-right circle of friends and family voted for Bush, too, because that's what Jesus would have done. By that time I wasn't so sure about Jesus anymore, but I pulled that lever with conviction, anyway.

A lot of things changed between my 2000 lever pull and 2004 button push. Like most of my friends, I had married early and never finished college. Suddenly in 2001, I found myself separated, working my way through college on a receptionist's salary. My boss kept me busy photocopying pictures of his boat and *Wall Street Journal* articles on the rich's unfair tax burden; he had inherited a large sum of money, but then had invested that money and made himself. As for me, I made a lot of hot dog ramen noodle stirfries.

But I got by. I looked for roommates to help with the rent and wound up with friends who taught me about lighting Hannukah candles, single parent families, and racial inequality. And I learned things that Bob Jones University Press had somehow omitted from my high school textbooks. In those last years of school, I gained a sense of possibility that changed my goals in life.

While the rest of my class was walking at commencement, I was moving into a little apartment in a working class Philadelphia neighborhood. I found a job in Center City coordinating mental health services where each day, I read case notes about people with "work and life stress," people who live in fear of violence, who cope with substance abuse, who are depressed, anxious, and stretched to capacity. It got me thinking about life in cubicles, offices, and factories across the country. I thought about people showing up every day at jobs that barely support their families, struggling through without help, trapped.

Back in 2000, there were so many things that I didn't know I didn't know. I was sure that

what I had been taught as a child, that in the United States, anyone could achieve anything, was true. But now, after work, I take the subway to Cecil B. Moore station and attend graduate classes in social work. We talk about how that's not true, how anyone can't achieve anything, and how it won't be true until we provide social justice and basic human rights, a living wage for each person and access to good education and health insurance. I can't escape from others anymore, whether they be the kids playing in the projects I pass near the train station, or the homeless man wearing trash bags that calls to me on my walk to work.

There has been a lot of talk about George Bush and isolationism. But there is another sense of isolation in the United States, one so broad and insidious that it blinds us to the needs of others and causes us, on our way to the top, to step on their backs. And then there is the isolation of flaunting our "self-made" accomplishments as a salve for loneliness and detachment. And the sense of isolation that is simply homogeneity, the presumption that what is best for ourselves and our circle is best for all people, everywhere.

I voted for Kerry in 2004. But the truth is that I don't think it was too much of a choice. The best candidate probably never had a chance to raise enough money, or join Skull and Bones. I wonder who Jesus would have voted for. Maybe he would have been too busy performing miracles and asking people to please not wear those silly WWJD bracelets to make it to the polls. Maybe we have all been fooled into thinking that one vote cast in one booth can set into motion the mechanics of a just government. Or maybe we have been lulled into complacency, content to pull a lever or push a button or check a box that transfers our responsibility for others away from ourselves and sends it to the halls of Washington, D.C. Some presidents are better stewards of our citizenship than others, but it looks like we can't count on that this time. For the next four years, we're all going to have to help each other out.

Jessica Clair can be contacted at jiexi@hotmail.com.

DISPATCH

BLUE AS A BEAVER

Oregon Progressives Win a Few Local Battles

BY ZACH DUNDAS

PORTLAND, Ore.—The light was failing over the city at the confluence of the Columbia and Willamette rivers, the city washed by monsoon-like northwestern rains throughout Election Day. I was riding in a white fifteen-passenger van in a working-class neighborhood called Roseway, home to a Safeway and many low-slung, sidewalk-less streets of ranch-style houses. In front were Katie Stem and Courtney Gould, two paid staffers for America Coming Together, trying to find some of the last fugitive voters in two heavily Democratic precincts.

In Oregon, everyone votes by mail, by either turning their ballot over to a (usually partisan) collection effort or by dropping their ballot off at a designated site. In the half hour I spent with them, Gould and Stem and the red-ponchoed volunteers under their care rounded up three ballots, one so battered it looked like it had nearly succumbed to the proverbial home-work-eating dog. They arranged rides for three voters who, for various reasons, said they needed to go to the county elections office and pick up new ballots.

"It's awesome, because at this point, every vote they collect is one that wouldn't have been cast otherwise," Gould told me as I bounced around in the back seat. "Gore won by about one vote per precinct in 2000."

And while Gould and Stem both thought with retroactively heart-breaking certainty that they were helping make John Kerry the president, what they really doing was blazing a trail for whatever kind of broad progressive political movement might manage to pull itself together in the wake of Kerry's defeat.

Election Day in Portland, despite Oregon's odd voting format, looked like Election Day is supposed to. People thronged sites where ballots were collected, forming massive chains of sign-waving, celebratory partisanship. In a city that opposed the president with as much fervor as can be imagined north of Berkeley or west of Paris, turn out neared ninety percent. That was largely thanks to ACT-istas like Gould and Stem, and to the menagerie of other groups formed both to skirt campaign finance restrictions and to reinvigorate an electorate that seemed stuck in a quadrennial pattern of atro-

phy. ACT alone spent as much as \$5 million in Oregon, most of which was focused on Portland, a metropolitan motherlode of Blue votes in a state that would otherwise be a Red clone, another Montana or Idaho.

As we now know, the unprecedented national get out the vote efforts deployed on Kerry's behalf were undone by Karl Rove's complementary efforts. But take away the rest of the country, for a moment, and look at Portland, and the larger (potential) significance of the energy expended in the effort to oust President Bush becomes clear.

Consider these not-unrelated developments:

- The massive, impassioned Portland electorate effectively delivered seven electoral votes to John Kerry.
- At the same time, the race in Oregon's First Congressional District, long seen as an opportunity for Republicans to pick up a seat on the strength of a highly touted, well-funded nominee, instead turned into a win for the Democratic incumbent. While the district stretches all the way to Oregon's coast, it includes Portland's most densely populated neighborhoods, home to many college students and young people.
- Oregon's Democratic Party took control of the state's Senate for the first time in a decade.
- A tightly contested city council race between two candidates nearly indistinguishable in their credentials tipped, at the last moment, to the younger, gayer, arguably more progressive candidate.
- A right-wing attempt to repeal a county income tax, which would have led to the gutting of local school budgets, failed.

For those who desperately wanted a John Kerry victory, all that looks like cold consolation. But with the Democratic Party faced with the necessity of rebuilding itself from the ground, the armies of volunteers, low-paid staffers and web-empowered partisans represent the only untrammelled source of energy available to it. So though Gould and Stem didn't turn the tide this time, they may represent the only hope for turning it in the future.

Zach Dundas writes for Willamette Week in Portland and edits www.mumbledge.com.



HIP HOP • POLITICS • REVOLUTION

REVIEW

More Dead Than Alive

BY DERIK A. BADMAN

Lou Reed. *Metal Machine Music*. RCA: 1975. 25th Anniversary CD edition, Buddha Records (2000).

The story goes (and for the sake of the metaphor, I'll go along with it) that Lou Reed set up two guitars and two amps and then let them feedback into each other. Thus we have *Metal Machine Music*: screeching, wailing, droning feedback (more than every Sonic Youth album put together). That's all. The great Lester Bangs, in his exaggerated way, proclaimed it "the greatest album ever made in the history of the human eardrum" and the "best medicine" for the "worst hang-over... to prepare you for what's in store for the rest of the day."

In its time, the double album consisted of four tracks, each on one side. Now the four tracks are on CD, each about sixteen minutes long, though sadly unable to reproduce the locked groove on the last track of the original album, which forced the listener to get up and turn it off.

Sixteen minutes of feedback, modulated to different frequencies, is not as repetitious as you might think. A lot of variation can be created from feedback, but you have to listen to *Metal Machine Music* on headphones, as I do

when walking around. Each ear is a completely different channel, competing with the other. Sometimes the left side comes to the fore, sometimes the right. Sometimes they both blast away at once: dueling "voices." Sometimes the high wail sounds like a baby screaming, or maybe an engine, a motor, a plane, a bird.

At first it is completely obnoxious, disturbing, an assault on your ears, on your conscious surroundings (the noise gives everything a sharp edge), but the longer it goes on, the more you become accustomed to the assault. It fades into the background; you start thinking over the noise. And then the silence: the tracks don't so much stop as just cut off, abruptly. Blessed silence. After that noise, the silence is an enlightenment, a presence in the absence, palpable. For a few seconds things are clear... until the next track starts.

Language eventually fails us. The point comes where sense is lost, where meaning can no longer be conveyed with words, where expression is impossible. *Metal Machine Music* has no words.

I've been listening to it a lot since Tuesday.

More of Derik A. Badman's writing can be found online at www.madinkbeard.com

RECIPE

Post Election Mix Tape

BY J. GABRIEL BOYLAN



THE CLASH

Know Your Rights

In fact, just listen to *Combat Rock* in its entirety, and repeat as often as necessary, praying at the same time that you won't ever need reminding of your rights.

TALKING HEADS

Life During Wartime

Art school? Yes. Cleaner-cut than the Ramones? Sure. Not really punk? Fuck you!

STIFF LITTLE FINGERS

Suspect Device

Listen to this song as you read the steady stream of articles that has already begun regarding the malfunctioning of voting machines, the institutional intimidation of voters, and the official blind eye cast on hundreds of thousands of votes in Ohio and Florida.

AT THE DRIVE-IN

One Armed Scissor

I realize this band is kind of lame, but they still wrote one of the best songs of the past ten years. "Is this the comfort of being afraid?" Let this song make you angry.

THE STOOGES

Raw Power

When making Molotov cocktails, designing insignias and looking over blueprints, it helps to have music on earth that is this dirty, this hateful and this true.

THE SAINTS

Know Your Product

The end of the sentence begun by Mick Jagger in noting, "He can't be a man 'cause he doesn't smoke the same cigarettes as me." Don't buy what they're selling you. Shoot the professor.

DEAD KENNEDYS

California Über Alles

Someone should really make a "Let Them Eat Jellybeans II" right about now. In the meantime, you can wait, watch and wonder if this song will come full circle when another actor-turned-California-governor gets the presidency, or at least some high-level cabinet position.

J. Gabriel Boylan is a freelance music journalist living in Philadelphia.

PUBLIC ENEMY

Black Steel in the Hour of Chaos

Again, just listen to all of *It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back*, but take extra time to take in the slithery narrative of Chuck D's prison riot, of his escape, of his freedom. And all because he wouldn't go into the Army.

PARIS

Bush Killa

Why has no one resurrected this song? Why was it never played at Kerry rallies? Fools! Paris is one of the best MCs ever, political or otherwise, and *Sleeping With the Enemy* is his masterpiece. He's still out there. Find him. Throw him a party! Have him open up for your band!

INTELLIGENT HOODLUM (AKA TRAGEDY)

Arrest the President

A rapper commenting on his time in prison does not a singularity make, but Intelligent Hoodlum's fiercely engaged political rants cut nearly as deep as Paris's vitriol, with a bit more context and better beats.

COMPANY FLOW

America

"My favorite flavor of gas is mustard. I'm fucking a blind hermaphrodite icon and convincing you that it's justice."

THE GOATS

Typical American

Not only were they from Philadelphia; not only were they funny as hell; not only did they have production that is still ahead of its time, but the Goats understood that making most Americans understand the polyglot nature of their nation is a lot easier when they are scared shitless of you.

AFRIKA BAAMBAATA & THE SOULSONIC FORCE

Planet Rock

Because Baambaata's vision of black futurism took Garvey a step further, positing that African-Americans would one day be delivered from the bondage of the U.S.A. and return to their home planet in outer space. How much more liberating a plan is that than pretending you'll move to Canada?

THE VOICE OF GOD

AS CHANELLED BY HOWARD GENSLE

Although disappointed in the election's outcome, I remain steadfast in my beliefs that educating the young, feeding the poor, housing the homeless, healing the sick, creating jobs, supporting science, cleaning the air, balancing the budget, striving for peace and loving thy

neighbor are not only winning political goals but sound Christian political goals. Perhaps after we win the war against terrorism we can concentrate on some of those things.

Howard Gensler writes for the Philadelphia Daily News

The Bush Doctrine

BY PENELOPE BLACKWELL

To people who value international law, George W. Bush's National Security Strategy—the so-called Bush Doctrine—was widely seen as an aberration, the sick fantasy of a soon-to-be-deposed cowboy who never had a mandate in the first place. Only a few days ago, the absurdity of his doctrine and his record of failures both in the United States and abroad were so overwhelming that it seemed impossible that more than half of the American electorate would exercise the willful blindness required to provide Bush with not just another four years, but the legitimacy his first term lacked. The inescapable reality of Bush's reelection is that the Bush Doctrine isn't going away, and to the horror of most of the world, it may very well shape the immediate geopolitical future.

Between October 24, 1945, the day the United Nations Charter came into effect, and September 17, 2002, the day President Bush unveiled his National Security Strategy, the nations of the world existed under the assumption that without United Nations approval, one country could not legally attack another country unless that country had invaded it first. This assumption, as codified in articles 2(4) and 51 of the United Nations Charter, was designed to permit nations to defend themselves against armies crossing borders—not against nations providing material support to terrorist operations, charismatic weapons-collecting dictators inspiring the masses to hate anyone's way of life, or "evildoers" whose removal is deemed essential to rid the world of some imaginary force of darkness.

The Bush Doctrine radically reinterprets the term "self-defense," a term about which there used to be a wide consensus that was at least partially responsible for the relative stability the world has enjoyed since the last World War. Today, as far as the United States is concerned, self-defense includes preemptive military action against a country governed by any regime that the President concludes would like to harm the United States, regardless of whether that regime even has the capability to do so.

It would be absurd, clearly, to imagine a law that would excuse a man who killed his neighbor and claimed in court that he acted in self-defense because the dead man was evil, and that, despite the fact that the dead man never threatened any harm, his very existence was such a dire threat to the killer's way of life that he had to be eliminated. Such a law would be absurd because it would allow a lot of people to be murdered for no particularly good reason.

Bush has alienated important American allies with his smug superiority and defiant unilateralism, but more important than this shortsighted impoliteness, Bush's foreign policy has made the United States and the rest of the world more vulnerable to instability and violence. The rights and duties of nations under international law are, gener-

ally speaking, reciprocal. That is, if the United States has the right to invade other nations to remove exaggerated or even imaginary threats, that right extends to every other country as well. Should other nations choose to exercise that right, the United States, with its over-extended military and less-than-enthusiastic allies, may become responsible for any number of new regional conflicts. But regardless of whether other countries are willing to invoke the Bush Doctrine themselves, the increased possibility of an unprovoked military attack by an enemy country has supplied proponents of nuclear proliferation with sufficient justification and domestic support. The combination of Bush's warmongering and scattered attention has resulted in increased weapons production not only in Iran and North Korea, but in fearful countries across Asia and the Middle East.

Because the Bush Doctrine requires only that a regime meet the vague criteria of posing a gathering danger before military action may be taken, it has incredible potential for abuse. The president himself may, at his discretion, identify the threats to be preemptively defended against. Such a process, if undertaken in good faith, requires a case-by-case evaluation based on known facts, which might be less worrisome if President Bush didn't consistently make decisions without regard for facts—and then advertise his disregard as "certainty," "conviction," or "faith." When reality becomes inconvenient, Bush and his staff ignore it or simply repeat that things are not as they seem, and if they repeat it enough times and with sufficient authority, they are believed. In effect, the Bush Doctrine requires only that the president allege some threat—real, imagined, or manufactured—and thus empowers him to attack any country he likes at any time.

The only checks that remain on the president's exercise of military force are sheer military feasibility and American public opinion. And yet in the face of incontrovertible evidence that Bush overrode the national security interests of the United States and all reliable intelligence information to carry out his personal agenda in Iraq, public opinion remains mysteriously on the side of the president and his gross errors of judgment. The American people have now had the opportunity to hold Bush accountable for four years of rogue behavior without a mandate, and most have, instead, chosen to affirm his policies and his vision of America and its place in the world. Now the president will have four more years in which to carry out his whims and whatever it is his gut—or his God—tells him to do next, all in the name of the people of the United States of America.

Penelope Blackwell is a pseudonym for an author and attorney with a background in international law.



Randall Sellers, Untitled, 2004

It's Not Enough to Be Right

from CAMPAIGN page 1

Democrats have always been good at inactivity, and good at losing. They have their industries of dissent to maintain, their *Harper's* magazines to cry into and their punk rock protests to attend with other punk rockers. They have their always increasing quota of self-abuse to meet, in articles like this one.

"Liberals are afraid to have power," the MoveOn staffer said. "And this is what power is: power is working your butt off to gain every single scrap of ground that you gain on your agenda."

Attacking other Americans personally; insulting their intelligence and their faith; employing outdated stereotypes about who chooses to live in the exurbs and suburbs of the country's midsection; ignoring the fact that when you get real close to the electoral map, the vote in the red and blue states is closer than it looks—these are all, ultimately, losing strategies. They're also gigantic wastes of time.

The same MoveOn staffer also said that she had never expected Kerry to win.

"Once you get out of the myopia [of a heavily pro-Kerry city] and you start to look at the big picture, then you see the reality is that people support Bush."

MoveOn worked by setting up a shadow system of electoral registration. After signing up voters, MoveOn members solicited pledges, or commitments to vote, from them. On November 2, they kept track of who voted, and rounded up the negligent.

MoveOn was the most hierarchically structured of the many groups that were both building the progressive community and competing for its attention this fall. It's so organized, in fact, that the precinct leader who I spent election day with had her watch synchronized to her next in command's; she called HQ every hour, on the thirty-third minute, to report her totals before promptly hanging up, no time for pleasantries.

But as tight a ship as they ran, MoveOn (like other liberal groups) was legally prohibited from collaborating with the Kerry campaign, and my senior MoveOn source said this split was yet another one of the challenges her organization faced.

Groups that catered specifically to the youth vote were even less aligned the party, embracing the decentralized, anti-authoritarian ideals of their constituents. These dispersed, autonomous clusters of like-minded people weren't just legally separated from Kerry's strategy (unlike the Republican camp, where Karl Rove and Ralph Reed chatted on conference calls). They were also, in many ways, ideologically opposed to the Democratic Party itself.

This fracturing of fronts, coupled with the party's move to the right—its pandering to conservatives and alienating of radicals that satisfies no one—prevented cooperation between D.C. and outsider efforts, perpetuating the perception of a desperate, "anyone but Bush" tack—a myth that wounded Kerry, who was, in reality, a fine candidate and perfectly qualified to hold the nation's highest office.

Among the sea of youth-oriented groups was New York-based Downtown for Democracy (D4D), one built, like many others, on a system of pledge-gathering and election day head-counting. D4D raised money for Democratic candidates, combining marketing and promotions with political field operations to reach out to youth in urban areas. They held an art auction, sponsored a reading featuring Jonathan Safran Foer, Dave Eggers and Jhumpa Lahiri, organized a John Sayles film screening, and threw concerts and parties in swing states.

There's no question that D4D and its fellow youth-focused activists did their best to energize and recharge young progressives. Indeed, Music for America (MfA), which sponsored concerts and voter-registration efforts nationwide, reported that more than fifty percent of registered voters between 18 and 26 years of age came out to vote this year, as opposed to thirty percent in 2000; in swing states, sixty-four percent did. And unlike in 2000, when Bush and Gore split that demographic, young voters went for Kerry over Bush by ten percentage points. Of course, that increase in participation was matched by an increase in voter participation across the board.

D4D succeeded not only in turning out a reported 100 percent of their pledges in Dayton, Ohio, but in bringing some life to the party. Karthik Pandian, who produced the Creative

Control tour (which brought the English band Bloc Party to Philadelphia in October), said that the tour was extremely well received.

"In Dayton and Toledo they're starving for stuff like this," said Pandian. "Nobody's ever done something like this before."

Powered by an East Coast cultural elite, D4D was a niche project with niche appeal. But in their own way, they did their best to mix things up.

"It was a priority for us to engage in different subcultures," Pandian explained, "so I made sure that whenever we were throwing parties in the same city, that each night was a different genre. We had a hip-hop night, a house night ..."

No one can say what the youth vote would have been like without these groups, and leaders like MfA's Mike Connery stress the long-term goal of building a sustainable progressive community over the short-term disappointment of November 3. But as far as tools for producing that short-term victory go, something is clearly lacking. To get to the point: sustainability is great, but I wanted Kerry to win.

Republicans, it has been said, have positioned themselves in a place to maximize their alignment with existing majority opinion. In order for Democrats to tip the balance in their favor, they bear the burden of changing the majority opinion.

Quite simply, digging up nonvoting Democrats in urban centers isn't good enough. Building a progressive coalition of the like-minded isn't good enough. Nor is driving the liberal message on a celebrity bus tour through the heartland. People do not have to be belittled or marketed to, they have to be persuaded, and that does not happen by sponsoring a rock concert or handing out designer T-shirts. I think it might happen when you talk to someone, one on one, for many hours, to build alliances, slowly—the same strategy that Christians use to build churches—but I'm not sure. After all, I've been talking to my mom for many hours for many years now, and it hasn't done much good.

Laura Dawn, event and cultural director for MoveOn, relayed the story of meeting students at the Vote for Change tour, which brought star power like Michael Stipe and the Dixie Chicks together to spread the we're-not-saying-Kerry's-name-but-don't-vote-for-Bush gospel.

"I asked them how they were going to vote, and they said they were just there to see Dave Matthews," she recalled. "They were going to vote for Bush."

"D4D's success is difficult to measure, it's just not quantifiable in numbers," Pandian said.

"The Creative Control tour was all about energizing and mobilizing the creative communities of these cities. It's not just hard numbers."

It's only natural that artists make art and party planners plan parties and that, in an election year, they do those things with political intent. But I'm tired of being energized and I'm tired of being mobilized and I'm tired of losing. The hard numbers do count, and I'm tired of them coming up short. I'm tired of the Democratic Party paying lip service to the left and moving its positions to the right and ignoring socially-minded people of faith. And most of all, I'm tired of easy solutions to a hard problem, which is that some people fundamentally disagree on the best way to run a nation, and until enough of those somebodies switch sides, we don't have a chance. Our task is not simply to build up from within, it's to branch out; it's to be evangelical about our politics.

No number of music festivals or fashion shows or celebrity spokespersons or antagonism and name-calling is going to get to the heart of the matter, which is the dire necessity for those on the left to kindly, calmly, and thoughtfully persuade those on the right of the worth of our plans and the value of our visions. Of course Republicans say "liberal" like it's "leper," of course they're smug and infuriating and rude. But when your guy got fewer votes, "he started it" is a pretty lame excuse. It's the logic of whiners and losers.

So enough with the gimmicks and the giveaways and the superiority complexes. If liberals are serious about winning, if we are serious about being in power, then it's time to forget about Bruce Springsteen and Marc Jacobs and it's time to stop talking to each other. Start talking to them. And before talking, start listening. That's what my mom said we should do, and I believe her.

The Other South of the Border

from MEXICO page 1

labor organizers, and attempting to organize a sweatshop requires eternal optimism). Since the PRI still controls local government, however, just as many people think change is impossible. Next week, Verónica will go to the polls not to vote but to cross out her name on the list of voters to ensure that no one claims her vote. "But one candidate has to be at least a little bit better than the other," I protested. She raised her eyebrows. I am so naive.

Last week, I huddled near the TV, watching an apparently stoned Tom Brokaw deliver the election results, or lack thereof, as Verónica and her family slept. At midnight, defeated by both the alarmingly red map in Democracy Plaza and the cockroaches scuttling past my feet, I went to bed. Tuesday had also been the Day of the Dead, and it seemed appropriate to turn off the TV just as the Mexican souls were retreating, well-fed and drunk on Tecate, to their places of eternal rest. Maybe Dubya would go with them, I thought. Maybe this was all a dream.

After flipping the TV back on the next morning and discovering that it was not, I talked to anyone who would listen about the election. As close as people here are to Texas, they are by no means fans of Bush; many, it seems, will never forgive him for halting negotiations with Fox on amnesty for undocumented immigrants after September 11, and Mexicans were largely opposed to the war in Iraq. Still, my friends here met my ranting about the election with little more than polite interest.

"Ah, that's your job, isn't it?" Verónica's sister Biri said when I explained that I had stayed up late watching the election.

A few hours later, I talked to her mother about it. "People in Ohio had to wait fifteen hours to vote," I said. She shook her head sympathetically but didn't reply. Fifteen hours? What is fifteen hours to a veteran of lines?

By that afternoon, when I found out that Kerry conceded, I had lost most of my eloquence. "Bush is just so stupid!" I yelled at the TV.

"I've always felt like he's controlled by other people," Verónica responded from behind me. "Like he's a puppet," she added. "Yes! He is!" I exclaimed. Finally, someone understood.

But the discussion didn't go any further. Verónica had spoken of Bush's puppet strings with absolute disinterest. It was as if she had said, "I've always felt like he's a bad soccer player." There was no undertone of shock. Some presidents are puppets, and some are not.

The primary lesson of Mexican politics is that people who are in power stay in power. After seven decades of rule by the PRI, it can hardly be deemed unusual when a president—even a stupid, lying taker of endless vacations—is reelected. The only change here comes for a month or two every three years, when the candidates here campaign, and life for the average Mexican improves marginally. As I write this, I am drinking out of a cup imprinted with the face of a city council candidate. The only other time people here get free goods is when the evangelicals come around—and the T-shirts they hand out are usually used.

And then, after the elections, life returns to normal. There are no more free concerts (the Kumbia Kings played outside the supermarket on Saturday), no giveaways, and certainly no tractors. People get out their shovels again.

After a few more Bushes in the White House, maybe, our system will pretty much resemble the Mexican model. (Mexico, meanwhile, might be on its way to democracy.) I'll adjust my thinking, I'm sure. If I'm still visiting people here when Jeb Bush is elected to his fourth term in 2020, I'll be able to talk about his presidency dispassionately, or, better yet—and this is the real test—not talk about it at all. In exchange for my complacency, I'll expect Jeb to clean up my neighborhood every four years, to make an appearance once in a while, and to at least talk like I matter. Do you hear that, Jeb? And I better get a free T-shirt.

Mara Hvistendahl can be reached at mara.hvistendahl@gmail.com

OPINION

COMMON SENSE

We Have More in Common With Bush Supporters Than We Think

BY LANCE HAVER

Who among us believed that John Kerry offered any real solutions? Bush's victory was predictable and in many ways justified. We failed to offer Americans real options or real answers to their fears. We didn't inspire them or earn their trust. We needed to organize, of course, but around what? The same issues we have been? That's the real question. To answer it I believe must accept the following:

1) The people who voted for Bush are not all ignorant, right wing lunatics. The majority of Bush supporters are more like us than they are different from us. They want quality schools, enough income to live, job security, health care, a better future for their children, decent, safe neighborhoods and safe retirement. Don't we share these goals? Our differences are in how we achieve these goals, not in the goals themselves. If we start the conversation by demonizing those that don't agree with us, how do we talk to them to show them our point of view?

2) We are winning the war on social issues. I know that many of the right wing pundits are saying social issues led to Bush's victory. And those of us who proudly support gay marriages and a woman's right to decide when and if she will have a child are saddened that others are attacking us to secure their voter base, but the attacks don't change the tide of history. As progressives we all too often focus on where we haven't gotten to yet instead of how far we have come. In the last fifty years there have been tremendous progressive strides on almost all social issues. Fifty years ago, in 1954, racism and sexism were not just problems; they were the law of the land. Forget about abortion or the morning after pill—contraception was illegal. As late as 1972 the liberal state of Massachusetts was arresting people for providing contraceptives to unmarried women. Women and minorities could be refused mortgages, insurance, jobs, almost anything, just because they were women or minorities. Less than twenty-five years ago, David Duke, a leader of the KKK, was considered an electable candidate for governor in Louisiana. Our sense of social justice has changed to such a large extent that even the right wingers have to have people of color in their administrations. In 1954 was the issue of gay marriages being debated? Of course not; homosexuality was illegal. Now even Bush gives lip service to gay rights. This is not to say that we don't have a long way to go, or that that justice delayed is not justice denied. It is just to place where we are in a historical context.

3) We have lost ground on economic justice over the last fifty years. On some level, everyone knows that. Once, many families were able to enter the middle class with only one person working. Now it is almost impossible. Instead our middle class is getting squeezed, with more and more money floating to the top ten percent and more and more people sinking to the bottom.

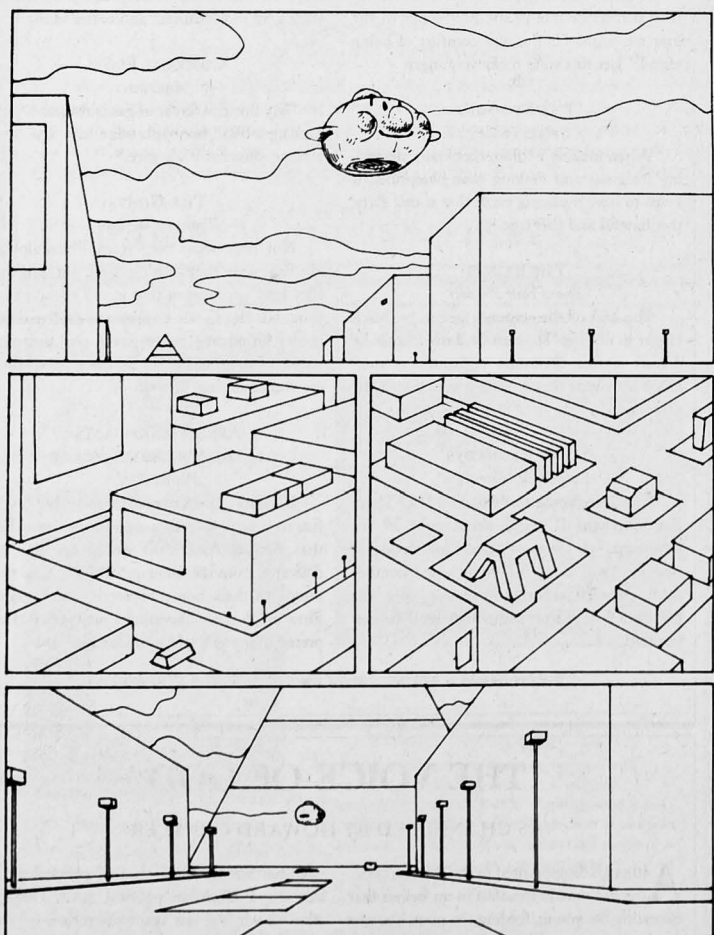
4) The culture of cutthroat capitalism has permeated our society. There is no real job security, no safety net; companies lay off workers without conscience, close factories without concern, merge and throw thousands out of work, and all so a handful of the very rich can become even richer. American society has become less civil. And those hurt by these changes, which are the majority of Americans, are looking for someone to blame.

The corporatists use our fears and loss of civility to confuse people into voting against their own interests. The reason why, they say, we feel insecure, unsure about the future and under attack, the reason why our society is less civil is because of the moral decay of abortion and gay rights.

On the other hand it is we who all too often attack the folks who are feeling insecure instead of offering an alternative reason why people feel under attack, attack the folks who are feeling insecure. Instead of joining with people who are feeling the difficulties caused by the cutthroat capitalists, we attack them. We tell them they are dumb, ignorant and just plain stupid and then wonder why they don't vote for our candidates.

It is time for us to join with those who are feeling hard pressed by our economic system. We must make an attempt to show that we are on the same side. We must organize with them for affordable utilities, insurance, housing and day care. It is time for us to say yes, you are right to feel more insecure, but not because a couple of people you don't know are getting married in someplace you have never been, but because the XYZ company is overcharging you, taking your job and trying to pollute your drinking water. And that multinational corporations have no loyalty to people in our countries, just their wealthy stockholders. If we want to lead, at the very least we have to champion issues that people feel, understand and support. It may feel more comfortable to speak with people who already agree with us; it just doesn't do that much good. And we must finally admit to ourselves that we can't call the people who voted for Bush names and then wonder why they don't like us.

Lance Haver is director of consumer affairs for the city of Philadelphia.



"CITIZENS, IF YOU SEE SOMETHING—SAY SOMETHING, OR SUSPICIOUS OF ANYTHING LEFT UNATTENDED, TELL AN AUTOCOP OR AN AUTHORIZED SERVICE PARTNER...POTENTIAL THREATS TO YOUR SAFETY SHOULD BE REPORTED..."

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CIVICS

OUR VOTING MACHINES

Herd Red Dots Into Black Boxes to Decide the World's Fate

The Danaher ELECTronic 1242 is a machine that counts votes. It is the size of a linebacker and the color of old pancake batter. It sits on little wheels and can collapse to about a third of its size. When fully erect, royal blue curtains hang from its plastic arms. In this chamber, the voter is confronted by a full-face ballot, meaning that the voter can view the entire ballot without having to scroll down. The names of the offices up for election are listed from top to bottom, and the parties from left to right. By law, the governor's party comes first, then the other major party, and then the two recognized third parties, Libertarian and Constitution. All other parties follow in alphabetical order.

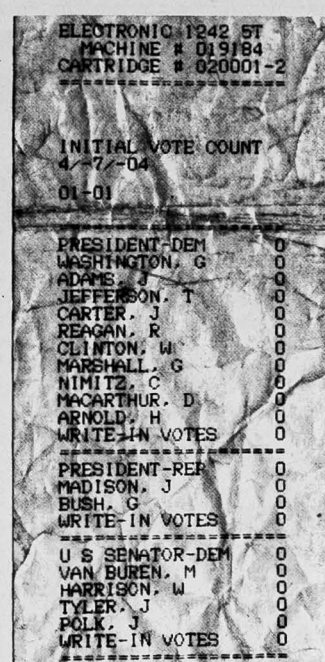
Before each voter enters this modest cabana of democracy, the polling attendant must set the machine, and, if the election is a primary, fix the ELECTronic to the appropriate party setting. Now the machine is ready, and a little red light dances beside the name of each office. When the voter touches the pressure-sensitive

cell of his chosen candidate, the red light jumps to that name. (Watching the dancing red lights doesn't seem quite as rigged as pressing some newfangled ATM-like touchscreen, although it can't compare to the electromechanical pleasure of pulling an old-fashioned lever, a treat still enjoyed by many Delaware County voters today.) The only time a pen and paper are involved are when a voter chooses to write in a candidate and a small slot opens with a spool of paper to record the alternate choice. Voters may change their selections as many times as they like before pushing a rectangular green button all the way down at the right side of the screen marked "VOTE." Then there is no more changing.

In 1993, Democrat William Stinson won the Second Senatorial District by 461 votes. Twenty campaign workers were later indicted for drumming up phony absentee ballots, ballots which supported Stinson four-to-one. Per the usual, U.S. Attorneys talked tough, a few wrists were slapped and a task force was

formed. They advised the city to switch to an electronic system. The voters approved the recommendation in 1998 and four years later, in 2002, the 200-pound Danaher behemoths finally arrived, by which time some said the machines were outdated. But Robert "Bob" Lee, the Philadelphia Board of Elections administrator who supervised the installation of the machines, defended the ELECTronic. When it comes to voting, he said, reliability is more important than keeping pace with every innovation.

Since 2000, there have been many concerns raised nationwide over electronic voting systems. Complaints include the lack of a paper receipt for the vote, the lack of a uniform national system of tabulation, the ease with which professors, students and engineers have hacked into models like the Diebold AccuVote-TS, and the machines' own erratic behavior in places like Boone County, Indiana, where one system recorded more than 144,000 votes cast by fewer than 19,000 voters. Nevertheless, the Committee of Seventy, a political watchdog group, released a report early this year endorsing the ELECTronic. And Lee's 2001 *Philadelphia City Commissioners' Office Report* strenuously argues in favor of the machines. The report says the ELECTronic eliminates the old lever-machine practice of having one official call out the result for each candidate at each polling station, and having



Who ever said civil servants don't have a sense of humor? Not us. A sample ballot receipt from the Danaher lists candidates from days of yore.

another write it down—saving officials the trouble of writing down an estimated three and a half million numbers. With the ELECTronic, elected polling officials will have nary a calculation to make or number to note. The computer does it all.

"You have no idea what a relief it is," he said. "Not to have to get mad at someone for human error."

The ELECTronic stores votes on its memory board and a removable cartridge inside the machine. On the night of the election, police officers pick up the cartridges and receipts from the city's 1,681 polling places, deposit them in vinyl bags and transport them to one of seven waystations. Twenty civil service employees then upload them onto a copy of the board's database. The Associated Press, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and *Daily News*, as well as five television stations pay \$1,500 in subscription fees per election to watch the votes being counted in real time. The media does a lot of their election forecasting with exit polls, but they use this database to call a winner. The government, however, waits until Friday, when twelve people repeat the process of uploading all the cartridges and factor in paper absentee and valid provisional ballots as well. Two weeks later, two percent of the machines are audited using the seven paper copies of vote totals that each machine spits out on election night. Of these seven copies, one goes to the Democratic

party, one to the Republican party, one is hung on the door of the polling place, one is taken home by the district's Minority inspector and kept for two years, and the rest goes to the Board of Elections.

If someone unplugs an ELECTronic while a voter is in the middle of casting a ballot, it's unlikely the voter will even notice. The machine smoothly, effortlessly switches to battery power; the only sign is the disappearance of soft light emanating from the booth's doors. The red lights do not flicker, and the vote is counted only once, said Lee.

"They have a battery. You can just keep on voting," he explained, during a visit to the board's office at Delaware and Spring Garden. It was a slow day in early summer, and they were still sifting through the aftermath of the primary.

To demonstrate, Lee reset the machine and invited the visitor to cast pretend votes. As she punched buttons labeled Abraham Lincoln and Ulysses S. Grant with abandon, Lee pulled the plug. Everything went dead. He placed a call to Joe upstairs.

"Is this other machine set up? The battery's dead on this one. I pulled the plug and it just started chirping," he explained to Joe. "It's dead. Believe me. Yeah. Yeah. It's dead."

Joe came down and repeated the experiment on a second machine with a fully charged battery. This time, it was a success.

ROLL CALL: HOW YOUR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES VOTED

A Selection of Measures from the Last Thirty Days

PHILADELPHIA CITY COUNCIL

FRANK DiCICCO (D): In late October, First District Councilman DiCicco introduced a bill that would ban cruising on South Street between Front, 11th, Lombard and Bainbridge streets between 7 p.m. and 3:30 a.m. First offenses will be punished with fines of \$100 to \$300. The bill defines cruising as driving by the same traffic point three times in two hours, bad news for South Street tailgaters and frustrated parking spotters alike.

	FRANK DiCICCO (D) 1ST DISTRICT ANNA VERRA (D) 2ND DISTRICT JANNIE BLACKWELL (D) 3RD DISTRICT MICHAEL NUTTER (D) 4TH DISTRICT DARRELL CLARKE (D) 5TH DISTRICT JOAN KRAJEWSKI (R) 6TH DISTRICT RICHARD MARIANO (D) 7TH DISTRICT DONNA REED MILLER (D) 8TH DISTRICT MARIAN TASCO (D) 9TH DISTRICT BRIAN O'NEIL (R) 10TH DIST. DAVID COHEN (D) AT LARGE WILSON GOODE JR. (D) AT LARGE JAMES KENNEY (D) AT LARGE BLONDELL REYNOLDS BROWN (D) AT LARGE JUAN RAMOS (D) AT LARGE JACK KELLY (R) AT LARGE FRANK RUZZO (R) AT LARGE																			
Summary of Bill or Resolution	Votes: Aye, Nay, Not Voting																		Result	Status
SCOOT OVER (040764): Bans the sale of the three foot-high mini-motorcycles known as "pocket bikes," and makes it illegal to ride them on public property. See story at bottom right.	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	PASSED 17-0	Sent to Myor Street for approval.	
NEW JOB TAX CREDIT (040640-A): Grants a Job Creation Tax Credit to certain businesses creating new jobs in the city.	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	PASSED 17-0	Sent to Mayr Street for approval.	
GAS LINE (040781): Vacates Morse Street from Beach Street to Allen Street and part of Allen Street to make way for a gas main.	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👎	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	PASSED 16-1	Sent to Mayor treet for approval.	
OUTDOOR DINING (040783): Permits sidewalk cafés to be maintained on both sides of Ninth Street between Christian and Federal streets.	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	PASSED 17-0	Sent to Mayor Steet for approval.	
CASH FORWARDING (040328-A): Authorizes the city to borrow money for various purposes; provides for a ballot question asking voters to decide whether or not to increase the city's deficit.	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	PASSED 17-0	Signed into law by Mayor Street.	

THE UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JIM GERLACH (R): Gerlach, a freshman, barely held onto his seat in a hard-fought race with Lois Murphy. Both candidates slung the mud with abandon. Republican ads accused Murphy of supporting the Taliban; the Democrats said Gerlach wanted to build a \$50 million rain forest in Iowa.

Summary of Bill or Resolution	ROBERT BRADY (D) 1ST DISTRICT	CHAKA FATTAH (D) 2ND DISTRICT	JIM GERLACH (R) 6TH DISTRICT	CURT WELDON (R) 7TH DISTRICT	JAMES GREENWOOD (R) 8TH DIST.	JOSEPH HOEFFEL (D) 13TH DIST.	Votes: Aye, Nay, Not Voting	Result	Status
ONLINE PRIVACY (HR 2929): The SPY (Securely Protect Yourself Against Cyber Trespass) Act protects internet users from spyware programs that might transmit personal information without their knowledge.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	399-1	PASSED	Received in the Senate.
DRAFT DODGING (HR 163): A motion to suspend the rules and pass a bill requiring all U.S. citizens between 18 and 26 years of age to perform two years of military or civilian homeland defense service.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	2-402	FAILED	Failed.
INTELLIGENCE REFORM (HR 10): The 9/11 Recommendations Act calls for intelligence reform to prevent terrorism. Requires the Attorney General to maintain criminal history information checks for employer use.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	282-134	PASSED	In conference with Senate's version of the same bill.

THE UNITED STATES SENATE

ARLEN SPECTER (R) Pa.: Specter is next in line to chair the Senate Judiciary Committee. But after Specter said he'd likely fight any Supreme Court nominee who would overturn Roe v. Wade, many senior anti-abortion Republicans are lobbying against his appointment.

Summary of Bill or Resolution	RICK SANTORUM (R) Pa.	ARLEN SPECTER (R) Pa.	JOSEPH BIDEN (D) De.	THOMAS CARPER (R) De.	FRANK LAUTENBERG (D) N.J.	JON CORZINE (D) N.J.	Votes: Aye, Nay, Not Voting	Result	Status
INTELLIGENCE REFORM (S. 2845) National Intelligence Reform Act 2004, a bill to reform the intelligence community and intelligence activities of the federal government.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	96-2	PASSED	In conference with the House.
FUNDING TERRORISM (S. Amdt 3802) Motion to table Lautenberg's S. Amdt 3802, intended to prevent corporations from financing terrorist organizations abroad.	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	47-41	AGREED	Amendment tabled.
COMMITTEE RULES (S.Amdt 4021): Would allow the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Foreign Relations Committee to serve as non-voting members of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	36-54	REJECTED	Rejected.

RICK MARIANO'S WAR ON SCOOTERS



City Councilman Rick Mariano began his citywide crusade against miniature motorcycles after hearing that the 23-year-old nephew of Carmen Salsa, one of his staff, had died in an accident involving one of the three-foot-high bikes. Last month, he finally got his way: City Council unanimously passed Bill 040764, banning the sale of "pocket bikes" and making it illegal to ride them on public property.

One man who wasn't surprised by Mariano's success is Lucius Dale Johnson, 52, the proprietor of For Your Fun scooters at 3224 Kensington Ave. near Juniata Park.

When Johnson opened For Your Fun last spring, Mariano, who sometimes hangs out a few doors down at the tattoo parlor Philly Ink, noticed. He called up the Department of Licenses & Inspections and found out that For Your Fun was operating without the proper permits. The shop was closed.

Johnson hired attorney Joseph Beller and an expediter, Dominic Aspite, to help him file paperwork with the city to make his shop legit. Yet he was worried about the loyalty of his legal agents. "My lawyer and the expediter did absolutely nothing for me," he complained.

Mariano said he is on friendly terms with Aspite, and recalled discussing the upcoming scooter bill with Aspite while Johnson was one of his clients.

By October, For Your Fun had reopened with a permit for commercial sales. Then Mariano stopped by for a visit. He noticed that the shop wasn't just selling scooters, but

was repairing them too, an activity that wasn't covered under their license. Johnson was showering in his apartment upstairs, but his nephew, Lynn Johnson, was working the store.

"He was swearing and cussing that he would close me down no matter what it takes," the elder Johnson reported. "My nephew called him a Communist."

Mariano testified before the Zoning Board of Adjustments and For Your Fun was closed down again. Before it could reopen, Mariano passed the scooter bill.

"It just seems unfair," said Johnson. "I said, 'Just let me sell what they have, and then I'll get out.' He said, 'Sell them on the Internet.' He doesn't care. Why doesn't the guy do something worthwhile?"

Mariano maintains that Johnson's store was illegal. "You shouldn't have done that," he remembers telling Johnson over the telephone. "You never came to me—no that it matters." The whole country of Canada banned them. If I was him [Johnson], I would get rid of them real quick. Take them out of the state, take them out of the country. Take them back to China. Mark my words, these bikes are gonna go the way of the laser pointer."

"I have a real motorcycle," he added. "A Harley."

Johnson says he wasn't a nuisance; just a small businessman trying to make his way through the city's intricate licensing laws.

"[Mariano] drove me into bankruptcy," Johnson says. "Everybody else was selling them, but he went after me. Any entrepreneur who wants to come to this city, think twice."

Johnson is left with \$50,000 worth of scooters that are now illegal to sell, and three children to feed, ages 5, 8 and 9. But he still has hope, and is now planning to go into business marketing his optimism and faith to others with the Universal Miracle Research Center. The center's mission, Johnson says, will be not so much to perform, hunt for or discover miracles, but to take miracles that are already out there, investigate their veracity, and notify the media. In so doing, the center will "bring good to the television and Internet, instead of all this bad," Johnson says.

NEW JOB TAX CREDIT (040640-A): Sponsored by Councilmembers Goode and Reynolds-Brown, this bill gives employers a city tax credit for creating new jobs, equal to two percent of each new job's salary. Goode has made economic development one of his pet issues. In late September, he threatened to subpoena Mayor Street's commerce director to force the city to release results from a two-day economic development summit. The Commerce Department complied, and released thirty-nine recommendations ranging from city-sponsored small business loans to higher standards for public schools.

DRAFT DODGING (HR 163): After the motion to suspend the rules and pass HR 163 failed, the House agreed to reconsider the bill at a future date. The Senate also has a parallel bill in the works; as of January 2003, it had been read twice and referred to the Committee on Armed Services. Those anxious about a compulsory, Israeli-style draft can take comfort in the fact that only one of the fifteen sponsors of HR 163, Rep. Stark (D-CA)—who was one of 133 to vote against the resolution to go to war in Iraq—supported suspending the rules and passing the bill. The other yay vote was cast by Rep. Murtha (D-PA). Stark accused the Republican leadership of bringing the bill forward not to pass it, but to kill it, thus shielding themselves from accusations that the Iraq war will cause a new draft by drawing down military reserves.

INTELLIGENCE REFORM (S. 2845): The National Intelligence Reform Act of 2004 establishes the National Intelligence Authority, an independent executive office. It also calls for a National Counterterrorism Center to coordinate civilian and military efforts, and a Joint Intelligence Community Council. The bill also requires that the President publicly disclose some intelligence funding information for years after fiscal year 2005, and creates within the Office of the President a Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board. The only votes against S. 2845 were cast by senators Byrd (D-WV) and Hollings (D-SC). Neither Senator Edwards (D-SC) nor Senator Kerry (D-MA) cast a vote.

FUNDING TERRORISM (S. Amdt 3802): In 1977, the Congress passed the International Economic Emergency Powers Act. If the president declares a national emergency due to a foreign threat, the IEEAP allows him or her to prohibit any financial transaction involving property in which that country or its nationals have an interest. This amendment, submitted by Senator Lautenberg (D-NJ) and co-sponsored by senators Clinton (D-NY), Feingold (D-WI) and Corzine (D-NJ), calls for expanding that law to prevent Americans and American corporations from engaging in financial transactions with countries that have repeatedly provided support for international terrorism. It also gives persons and corporations ninety days to divest such interests. Since the amendment was tabled, the act now only calls for a report, due six months from the bill's passage, exploring the financing of terrorism and recommending ways to curtail such financing.

John McCain Has a Posse

BY FAITH POPINJAY

The best case scenario now is McCain in 2008. And no, not McCain as a converted Democrat. John McCain is smart. He did not become a Republican in some drunken fraternity haze. Party affiliation is one of the primary reasons the Senator from Arizona is so popular. The Republicans have a proven, viable brand, a Coke to the Democrats' Corvair, and McCain displays it with charming, flip flopping, corporation-lambasting inconsistency, in much the half-earnest way a tousled record store clerk sports a pair of Nike Vandalas. You, too, can display this brand. If there is anything to learn from the recent rise in polo shirt collars, the chart-busting Q-factor of Reaganite strong-hold Orange County and the lasting appeal of martinis, it is that the co-opt generation can, and *should*, co-opt the GOP brand. Change your registration, participate in Republican primaries and start *influencing*, in the subtle way you perhaps once influenced the headwear choices of your grammar school classmates, the right-leaning masses.

Because, as the recent election has shown, the masses are leaning right. A Democrat has not won a majority of the popular vote for president since Jimmy Carter, and if talk of Hillary Clinton's hopes for the nomination is anything but wishful rightist thinking, the party is not about to recover its brand equity anytime soon.

Let us not forget what a banner year it was for GOP iconoclasts. First was anti-war elder Bush adviser Brent Scowcroft, then disgruntled Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill and *My Party Too* author Christie Todd Whitman. There was reformer neocoon Francis Fukuyama, Reagan speechwriter and chuckling Ron Suskind source Bruce Bartlett, longtime log cabin pundit Andrew Sullivan, and countless lower-level ambassadors, officials and opinion makers.

More recently and notably there was Arlen Specter, our senior senator in Pennsylvania. A

composite of Specter's quarter century voting record at Issues2000.org spit out this description of his politics: "Moderate Liberal Populist." His is a dying breed within the Republican Party. Just this week, Specter's chairmanship of the Senate Judiciary Committee was hurled into doubt when he referred to the right to an abortion as "inviolable." Why aren't more senators backing him up, cutting the old coot some slack? Why not start with our other senator in Pennsylvania, Rick Santorum. In 1993, when prominent state Republicans were deciding who was going to challenge Sen. Harris Wofford, a

near-slavish brand loyalty to the Democratic Party that not only belies their mortled consumption patterns and eclectic musical tastes, it *defies reason*. What, pray tell, have the Democrats in this city done for you that didn't involve a meaty campaign contribution?

In Philadelphia, to be somebody in the Democratic Party you've got to first meet every Democrat in the 400 houses surrounding yours, unseat your committeeman, throw at least a grand into each of the oft-dueling spheres of influence commanded by Mayor John Street, State Senator Vince Fumo and Congressman Bob Brady, and show up to every fifty-dollar-a-plate fundraiser the insipid John Dougherty of the Electricians Union hosts. Not only is this an incredible investment of effort and money, it involves spending hours upon hours with *union leaders*, with their knockoff Timberlands and their shamelessly studied use of terms like "youse," their misinformed disdain of any BYOB that opened after the Rizzo era, the preposterous Vatican-like secrecy with which they shroud all events leading up to the filming of

the "Real World," the general conspiratorial tones they adopt when discussing things as pathetically insignificant as whether Frank DiCicco will win back his ward leader position, and their terrible jukebox selections.

You, dear reader, have about as much in common with the average Local 98 member as you do with the average Bob Jones trustee. The difference is that the Bob Jones trustees are on the winning team; they are sponsored by a viable brand. You can be, too. Enough old-school iconoclasts in the Grand Old Party could send the Evangelicals voting for a Third Party Perot type and jump-start the Democrats on their Firestone tires. At the worst, we'd have McCain. In four more years, we'll likely have more important concerns than brand loyalty.

Faith Popinjay studies the future and designs small vinyl figurines.



A lawn sign in Delaware County on Election Night. Photograph by Leigh Maida.

Democrat who'd won the space left open by the 1991 death of moderate Republican Senator John Heinz, Santorum was not everyone's first pick. Specter tried to recruit Teresa Heinz, who decided against it. By early 1994, Santorum was virtually unopposed.

So perhaps you weren't around to sway the future Heinz-Kerry before her party was overrun with Contract With America types in pleated Dockers and shirtsleeves. And you probably didn't vote for Specter in the general election. All this matters less than the fact that, in these desperate times, you probably didn't so much as mull lending support or time to our senior Senator in his tragically close primary battle against the fervently pro-life National Rifle Association poster child Pat Toomey. Most INDEPENDENT readers, I have found, have developed—and this year reaffirmed—a

Did Bush Pray to the Weather Gods?

BY RANDALL SELLERS

Maybe the voting machines malfunctioned and maybe they didn't; maybe the pollwatchers miscounted and maybe they counted just fine. Maybe the media called things too early or maybe they didn't call early enough; maybe voters were disenfranchised and maybe they weren't. People have lots of ideas about why the exit polls weren't like the final counts, and even more ideas about how Bush swept ahead in the final days of what had seemed to be a dead heat. But I have my own theory: the weather.

A Quinnipiac University poll of 1,094 registered Florida voters, conducted August 5 through 10, showed Kerry leading Bush forty-seven to forty-one percent, with seven undecided and four for Nader.

But then came the hurricanes—four of them in just six weeks, a first in the recorded history of the state. Charley, Frances, Ivan, and Jeanne attacked both sides of Florida's peninsula and the panhandle, displacing thousands of residents, leaving tens of millions without power, destroying homes and businesses, and complicating election projections and campaign efforts in the critical swing state that Bush had won in 2000 by just 537 votes.

Kerry's Florida campaign came to a halt. A Massachusetts senator touring the wreckage would have been viewed as political and opportunistic. President Bush, on the other hand, interrupted his regular campaign schedule and came to the rescue, not once but four times, petitioning Congress for more than \$12 billion in relief money for the state. Governor Jeb Bush, the President's brother, capably steered Florida through the storms and towards recovery, enjoying a boost in approval not unlike Rudy Giuliani's after September 11. And on November 2, the battered but grateful state delivered President Bush a decisive win by a margin of more than 375,000 votes. Twelve years ago, the president's father had been slow to visit and grant aid to Florida when the massive Hurricane Andrew struck during his reelection campaign. He was widely criticized for his neglect, and it might have cost him a second term. The younger Bush's rapid, sustained, and generous attention to the recent Florida hurricane crisis was, no doubt, a lesson learned from his father.

The current administration's public relations juggernaut seems to have been well served by the impeccable timing of events, beginning with September 11 and ranging from the obvious fall-out (code oranges, beheadings, messages from Osama) to the curiously oblique and

seemingly unconnected: a freak heatwave that killed 15,000 in France and effectively silenced that country's loud objections to U.S. designs upon Iraq; rolling blackouts in California and the Northeast; SARS outbreaks that dampened news of Asia's sparkling economy.

Add to this bizarre sequence of events the sudden arrival of four hurricanes in Florida during the high campaign season that effectively scrambled election projections and busted Democratic efforts while boosting the brothers Bush to savior status, and we must hoist our eyebrows to the heavens and wonder: were these storms made to order?

Weather modification, in popular imagination still consigned to the realm of fiction—usually in the hands of hyperbolic big screen villains like Lex Luthor—has in fact been the subject of scientific experiments since the 1940s, restricted by U.S. law in the 1960s, reportedly exercised in Vietnam, banned by a 1976 United Nations treaty (Convention on the Prohibition of Military or any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques), and quietly revived and pursued under the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) in the 1990s through to the present.

Today, what some critics have called weather modification experiments are conducted out of Gakona, Alaska, under the auspices of the High Frequency Active Auroral Research Program (HAARP). Operated by the Air Force Laboratory's Space Vehicles Directorate, HAARP is essentially a system of powerful antennas capable of inducing localized changes to the earth's delicate ionosphere, or upper atmosphere.

HAARP's antennas, erected in 1993 by a subsidiary of British Aerospace Systems are based on technology patented by Advanced Power Technologies (APT), a subsidiary of the giant oil conglomerate Atlantic Richfield Corporation (ARCO). In 1994, APT and its patents were sold to E-Systems, a high-tech outfit retained by the CIA and other defense intelligence organizations for more than \$1.8 billion in projects, including \$800 million in "black budget" projects unaccountable to the U.S. government. E-Systems is now owned by Raytheon, one of the world's largest defense contractors.

Ionospheric heating systems similar to the HAARP facility in Alaska may also be found in Norway, Russia, and Puerto Rico. Cooking the ionosphere is dangerous business, but critics argue the results have wide application in the realm of strategic defense: enhancing submarine communications, disabling electrical grids, plunging enemy states into flood and

drought, and even creating and steering storms.

HAARP fronts as a humble weather station. It emphasizes on monitoring, rather than actively modifying, the ionosphere. The Department of Defense prefers that weather weapons remain seen as the stuff of science fiction blockbusters. But the regulations and treaties of the 1960s and 70s have apparently been abandoned to the dustbin of quaint utopianism, along with esperanto and the metric movement. Today, weather modification is viewed—under the radar, of course—as a valuable and effective means of 21st century warfare, presumably alongside the genotype-specific bioweapons that Cheney and Rumsfeld's Project for a New American Century hails as "politically useful."

Weather modification is also used in commercial farming and environmental applications. Russian companies advertise to manipulate weather for a fee. In 1997, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that Malaysia had ordered a cyclone (as hurricanes in the Indian Ocean and South Pacific are called) to be created and steered along the coast to blow away smog, apparently from one such Russian operation.

In the U.S., weather modification is handled by defense-intelligence contractors who have profited enormously from Bush's runaway defense budget. But to suggest that these mercenaries may have been contracted to create and steer hurricanes into Florida in order to guarantee a Bush victory will have skeptics crying, like a chorus of trained parrots, "conspiracy theory!" even before a proper investigation has been undertaken. These parrots will likewise dismiss the matter of uncounted votes in Ohio, and get on with their sordid lives as Good Americans. But the matter is certainly worthy of investigation. For all of the interest in crime-solving among Americans—witness the staggering popularity of television programs like *CSI*, *Law and Order* and *Forensic Files*—it's a puzzling shame that we've been so thoroughly dissuaded from turning our eagle eyes to the investigation of state-level crimes, which offer the juiciest challenges of all.

In the wake of another stolen election, we should all become "conspiracy theorists," which is to say, independent investigators and researchers. We should share our findings loudly and repeatedly until the whole world listens. It only takes, after all, the flap of the tiniest of butterfly wings to send a monsoon halfway round the globe.

Randall Sellers is an artist living in Philadelphia. He can be contacted at randallsellers@hotmail.com

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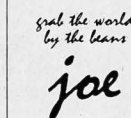
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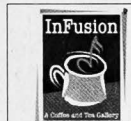
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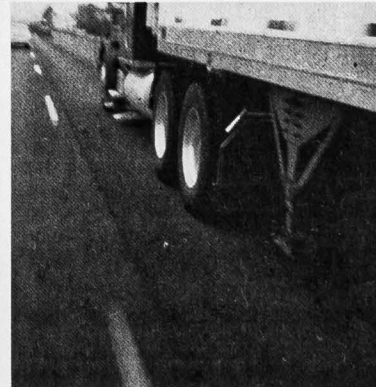


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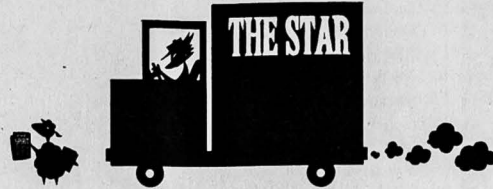
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MEDIA

NEWSPAPER WARS

Knight Ridder's Star Faces Spirited Local Challenger

BY LAURA COXSON



Last May, Knight Ridder Inc. did something it does every few months: it bought up a string of neighborhood newspapers, paying an estimated \$1.5 million for Jonathan Stern's *Star* publications. What had once been a rubber cement and graph paper operation in a shabby office near the Girard Avenue El would now be run out of Knight Ridder's suburban office park in Trevose and printed at their plant in Conshohocken, along with the company's flagship Philadelphia properties, the *Inquirer* and *Daily News*.

Within a few weeks, however, something odd happened. The readers rebelled. They would not read this revamped *Star*, with its strange new flag and typeface, its new office too far away to drop their first Holy Communion announcements in person. They would start a new newspaper. And lo, a new newspaper, the *Spirit*, was born on Girard Avenue.

But this is not just the story of a community rising up to defend itself against a multibillion-dollar corporation. It is the story of a neighborhood coming to terms with its own changing identity, the story of a place where people still pay attention to who owns their neighborhood newspaper.

Throughout the 1990s, Fishtown had year after year of the status quo—the same dozen corner taverns, the same static real estate prices—and it wasn't especially thrilled with that, either. But things started changing around the time that Standard Tap owner William Reed bought a house in the neighborhood and scores of young people began biking across town for a midnight pint at his remodeled Johnny Brenda's. Soon, men in gray turtlenecks started showing up at every open house. Then came the pilates studio, the coffeshop and the vintage boutique. And all of a sudden, a big media company took interest in a little weekly newspaper.

"They like traditions, they like things to stay the same," says Maryanne Milligan, born and raised in Fishtown, of her old neighbors. Milligan, 43, lives in New Jersey, but has kept up on neighborhood goings-on through her older sister. The sale of the *Star* was a major going-on, and Milligan had heard talk in the neighborhood of starting a new one. Milligan and her husband, a Fishtown native just retired after twenty-four years in PepsiCo management, decided to learn more, and soon met Carol Denker.

The Milligans had long left Fishtown by the time Denker arrived. A Brooklyn native, Denker had come to Philadelphia with her first husband and two young daughters in the late 1970, one of those wiry young creative types whose life would be a constant struggle for balance. "I was born with a lot of talents; writing and music and art," she says now. "But I was always trying to find something more normal, not as intense." She worked as an art therapist, a portrait artist and schoolteacher; she married three times, but each one ended sadly. "In 1998 I was flattened emotionally and physically. I had to turn to myself and say, who am I?" She walked outside her door and found a copy of the Fishtown *Star* with a large advertisement inside seeking new writers. A few days later, she was hired to write at the old office on Girard Avenue.

In those days the *Star* was edited by Debbie Szumowski, who worked eighty hours a week on the *Star* and somehow inspired the same dedication in others. Szumowski put Denker to work on writing about "pancake breakfasts and oyster dinners" in the River Wards. Fishtown, Denker found, was a place of captivating contrasts. There were geriatrics living next door to rock musicians, philosophers next to general contractors, the neighborhood's burgeoning creative side was balanced by a backbone of tradition and domesticity and warmth. There were also bullies and trash-strewn lots and occasional undercurrents of racism, but Denker, like Szumowski, was the type to see the promise in things, and she saw promise on every one of Fishtown's diagonal streets. She bought a house on Montgomery Avenue. "Basically I'm an optimist," she says. "There are all of these little pots of gold."

In 2001, Szumowski was stricken with ovarian cancer. From a phone next to her hospital bed, she directed Denker on how to edit and lay out the paper, an image that remained with Denker even after the paper unceremoniously moved to Trevose. Denker knew the spirit of the old *Star* was missing, and soon realized that would be the name of her own paper—the *Spirit*—where she could give Fishtown the kind of paper Szumowski had taught her to run. Denker met with the Milligans alone at Silk City in mid-June. "We were very impressed," says Maryanne Milligan. Within a week, they agreed to fund the newspaper, and Denker quit her job at Fishtown's Hackett School. Now Denker hopes to carry her mentor's legacy forward. "She was amazing, because she only did what she believed in. Watching her, I realized that it was possible to do more than just pander to the worst in people," she says, "but to give them something better."

Denker wanted to carry her young newspaper into the future as much as she wanted to root it in the past. She rented an office from Reed, by now a staple of the new Fishtown. She bought six computers and a layout program, and sought new contributors on the online bulletin board Craigslist. She went before the neighborhood associations and social clubs to tout the *Spirit* as a paper that would never lose touch with its community and its roots.

Denker wrote an editor's letter on the front page of the first issue, describing the *Spirit* as a "celebration of old and new" in Fishtown. The issue ran pictures of Catholic school kids, a story about the pilates studio and a side-by-side profile of two neighborhood activists, one 91 and the other 28. It was twenty pages long and took three near all-nighters and one bona fide all nighter to get to press. "I went home thinking, this was not a good decision," says Denker. "It was scary, and we were so tired... and the next day I walked outside wishing I had my safe school job back." But then the stream of phone calls, and emails, and old-fashioned letters began to arrive, washing away her doubts. The newspaper was a success, with Fishtown old and new. An Irish Catholic fraternal organization, sent the *Spirit* a letter praising the newspaper for being "not willing to accept what the new owners [of the *Star*] print and drop in front of their doors once a week."

The staff of the *Star*, a mixture of old Girard Ave. veterans and new Knight Ridder administrators, soon began taking notice of their new competition.

In early October, a man showed up at the *Spirit* offices and said he was looking for a job. A *Spirit* employee recognized him as a writer for the Knight Ridder-owned *Northeast Times*, which shares an office with the new *Star*. (The writer in question, John Lowry, confirmed in a brief phone conversation that he had visited the "small and dingy" *Spirit* office, but would not elaborate. "I don't really think it has anything to do with you," he said, and refused to answer further questions.)

Patty-Pat Kozlowski, a longtime *Star* writer has continued writing for Knight Ridder's *Star* because its editor, Matt Pettaccio, is a friend. Kozlowski, a neighborhood fixture for her stories, her sense of humor and her (once-450 pound) girth, had worked for the *Star* newspapers longer than anyone, and she felt compelled to help out her old colleagues. When she had a barbecue to celebrate the one-year anniversary of her stomach stapling surgery, Pettaccio attended; when the sale was announced, she thought it would open the door for the men's fledgling journalism careers.

But the sight of the new *Star* newspapers, which come out on Wednesdays, still stacked up on the weekend, made her sad.

"People used to wait on their doorsteps on Wednesday afternoons to get the paper," she remembers. Now people were waiting to see the new *Spirit*. Kozlowski, who works as an aide in City Hall by day, thought about moving her freelance journalism career to the *Spirit*, where her knowledge of and contacts in the Port Richmond neighborhood could extend their geographic reach. *Star* editors, in turn, began suggesting the paper could up Kozlowski's pay if

Man Drives Cardboard Tank

Had you been driving across the Spring Garden Bridge one afternoon early this September, you would have been forced to cede the right of way to a 175-pound, thirteen-foot long, bicycle-powered, wooden-framed cardboard tank. Driving the tank was 23-year-old Billy Blaise Dufala, a bright-eyed art school graduate running on an hour of sleep and a flat tire.

Dufala set out on his sortie at 4:30 p.m. from his studio at 41st and Hamilton. The tank's construction had been completed only minutes before, but there was no time for a test drive. Dufala was making a film whose timetable had been set long in advance. The crew had already arrived and, with the light fading, the tank had to roll out now.

As Dufala pulled out onto Spring Garden, a team of videographers and photographers including Matthew Kucynski, Peter Danz, and Nick Schummer drove alongside. Crew member Andrew Carrigan was ordered to run alongside the tank and capture a pedestrian view on digital video for the duration of the three-hour trip to Second and Market streets. Carrigan, who had shown up in dress shoes and a collared shirt but gamely purchased \$19 slip-on sneakers (Payless) and a "Secret Agent" t-shirt (J. Goldberg) for his grueling assignment. He managed to catch his breath briefly at the corner of 36th and Spring Garden streets when one wheel jammed up, and the parade came to a halt.

The crew couldn't untangle the tank's cardboard chassis from the lame cruiser inside, so it went back to the studio for a saw, cut a hole in one of the tank's crossbeams so the wheel could continue to rotate, and rode on the cruiser's rim. They had come too far to abort the mission now.

"I had all these people come out to help me," Dufala explained. "I couldn't stop. You just gotta do it to get it done."

Peering out of the hot-dog sized eye-hole he had cut in the tank's front, Dufala had no

peripheral vision. Nor was he wearing a helmet. The bicycle fishtailed back and forth on its jerry-rigged suspension, forcing him to steer with his shoulder.

Somehow, he still managed to rotate the contraption's mighty cannon, scaring the Panzers out of any driver who encroached on his chosen lane. While trapped in Chinatown's rush hour gridlock, the driver of a golden sport utility vehicle rolled down his window.

"Why don't you shoot me?" he taunted Dufala. "I'm a Republican!"

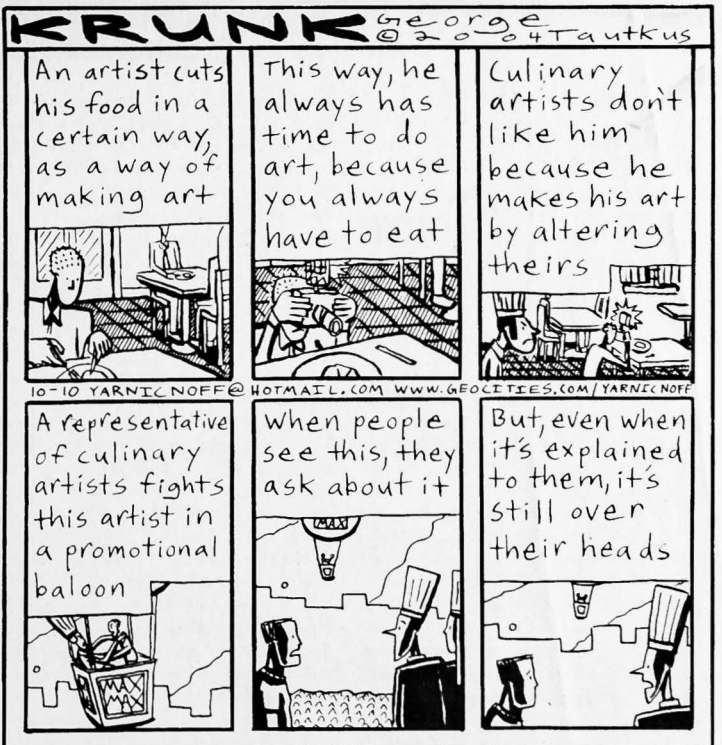
Dufala, who says his intent with the tank was not to make an overt political statement, but simply to explore his interest in mobile, public art that forces people to engage, pointed the cannon at the driver and screamed.

Otherwise, the evening commute proceeded without incident.

The tank, alas, is no more, cast away like an old scaffolding around the temple of Dufala's art. At 9 p.m. that same evening, Dufala parked it under a trestle at 11th and Wood streets. He returned at ten the next morning to find that someone had chopped up the tank's cardboard chassis and made off with the castors and the cruiser.

But don't feel too sorry for Dufala. This wasn't his first tank and it's unlikely it will be his last. In April, he constructed a similar cardboard tank for an exhibition at Spartaco Gallery, an immobile prototype that was dismantled after the show. When the idea for a rolling tank struck over the summer, he rebuilt the entire vehicle from scratch.

In addition to the tanks, Dufala has built a rolling toilet, and a rolling cheese grater, as well as organizing the tossing of 5,000 paper airplanes off a ten-story factory in South Philadelphia. Despite the flat and the missing cruiser, he considers the tank project a success and is already contemplating his next art scheme. "It's not going to stop here," he vowed.



she continued to write for their newspaper. Kozlowski confirmed the existence of a "bidding war" over her work.

And then there were the rumors. Kozlowski was having a beer at a neighborhood tavern when she first heard that "people at the *Star*" had been "telling people" that if she left the *Star* for the *Spirit*, it would be the death knell for her occasional gig penning opinion columns for the Knight Ridder-owned *Philadelphia Daily News*. "Nobody at the *Daily News* told me that," she says. "But when you hear something enough times... she trails off."

For now, Kozlowski says, she's staying with the *Star*. Some advertisers, on the other hand, have made the switch, like Jim Lee, owner of Fishtown's Philadelphia Beer Company.

"All the customers had complained when the *Star* was sold to the *Inquirer* and moved to Trevose," he said. Lee had advertised in the Stern-owned *Star* and gave Knight-Ridder a shot. But, he said, they weren't very attentive.

"[The old *Star*] had a guy come in every week, but with the new company, they just came once in a blue moon. One holiday I forgot to put an ad in, and the next week, the guy from the *Star* came in. I was like, 'Are you kidding me? Why would you come the week after?'"

Holidays are very good days for beer distributors. "He gave up on the *Star* and has been running an ad in the *Spirit* ever since. The *Star*, he says, was quick to take notice."

"Ever since they saw my ad in the *Spirit*, they've been coming in every week, lowering the price." He has no plans to return to the *Star*, no matter how low the price gets. "That's not the point anymore," he said.

Pat Buzine, who's been selling ads for the *Star* for over twenty years, said she was unaware of any price wars, but did say that some long-standing *Star* advertisers were experimenting with running ads in both papers. "It's a new product," she said. "Competition keeps us fresh."

But to Denker, the experience of creating the *Spirit* was much more than bringing a new product to market. "The first issue was very hard," she remembers. "It was almost like having a baby—you don't want to remember the pain afterward. But the response! In this day and age, what's that feeling that you never got more than what you pay for, that there's nothing human. But our writing and our graphics are full of extras. We give you a lot. We love doing this: that's the feeling we put across. And now, we're in a groove."

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BEAUTY

THE MODERN STYLIST

Lovely Limey Makes Name Taming Mods' Manes

BY CHRISTINE SMALLWOOD



So I'm at the Gap on Walnut, attempting to purchase a pair of black jeans. The boy behind the register takes my credit card and looks me over. Is there a problem?

"I love your hair," he says, handing me my card back.

Lee Clapson, my hairdresser, says my experience is not an unusual one.

"My clientele is purely built up from people being stopped on the street," says Clapson, now in his eighth year of cutting Philadelphia hair at Old City's East End Salon.

One of those people is Yoko Arayama-McCarthy, who Clapson calls his "original muse."

Yoko enjoys casually griping about the inconveniences of wearing a Clapson haircut around town. "There are a lot of psychotic women who chase me on the street to find out who does my hair. They just *have* to find out," she says, running a hand through her feathery black tresses. "They come up to me at restaurants, when I'm shopping. Three years ago, I was walking by the Wella School in Tokyo. This was before everyone was modern, before *Nylon*. All the students were outside smoking their cigarettes, looking at me and whispering. I went like this"—Yoko pointed at the students, her fellow initiates—"and said: You guys *know*."

As a student in London in the late 1990s, Clapson spent hours each day learning to move just one blade of the scissors. A few years later, at the age of 19, he was traveling around Europe and Asia, teaching audiences of thousands and hairdressers twice his age. By 1995, he was assistant art director at the Jingles International Hair Academy.

It was there that he met fellow stylist and future wife JoJo when she came to London for a seminar, traveling on behalf of Philadelphia's House Productions salon. Clapson, who prides himself on his astute sense of smell, noticed JoJo sniffing a hair product. It was love at first sight.

In 1996, the two married and Clapson moved to Philadelphia. He took a job at House Productions for a few years, until he and JoJo moved to East End, a chic Old City salon decorated in reds and browns.

Now, Clapson wields his scissors with expertise. Actually, they're \$600 Japanese shears, pounded from hundreds of layers of heated, folded cobalt steel, just like Samurai swords are. Even more precious and exotic are the hands that wield them, long hands, with delicate muscles bunched around their substantial knuckles.

"People always say I have the hands of a

heart surgeon," he smiles.

Clapson prefers the straight razor; it gives him the ability to fine tune layers. But when he does use shears he likes them short, about five inches, like most British and Japanese stylists. His artistry is very precise.

"Generally speaking, the British have a much greater respect for the art of the salon than Americans do," Clapson says. "In Europe, it's what you do. Here, you're known for *who* you do," something both Clapsons are known for as well. They've styled members of the Chemical Brothers, Massive Attack, Terry Gross, Martina Navratilova, Duran Duran's Simon LeBon, and the personal assistant of the artist once again known as Prince. Most recently, they were hired by MTV to style the cast members of "The Real World" for the show's opening credits.

Cast member Sarah Burke was pleased with Lee's treatment. "He was very good at using his skills to make my hair look amazing," she wrote in an email.

If you're lucky enough to land an evening slot, Lee will offer you a Stella Artois. He has no compunctions about smoking on the job. He generously offered me one of his Parliaments and encouraged me to ash it on the floor.

Every appointment begins with a consultation. He touches the client's hair, stares at their face, and examines the magazine clippings which conscientious clients bring to every salon appointment.

"As a hair artist, your canvas comes in many different lengths and textures," he explains. "Your canvas has many different personalities. I always have realistic ideas for the simple things and for the client who wants to push the envelope." He grafts his artistic vision onto the client's own, says McCarthy. "He understands what you want and is really good when what you want is what he wants, too." What he wants for himself is always messy locks that ape the old British mods.

"Every time we're watching 'VH-1 Classic' and the Jam comes on, there's hair on the bathroom floor," laughs JoJo.

Clapson's own hair looks like the Jam's Paul

Weller, short on top and wisps trailing down the neck. His talents command \$75 a head for women and \$55 for men if you're new; some old steadies get breaks. He knows his tastes could pose a threat to the mannered ways of the city's hair world. "Hairdressing can be very robotic here," he said. "People are afraid to go beyond. You've been to three hairdressers in the city, you've been to them all."

This past summer, East End started opening the salon for First Friday to show off stylists' portfolios; in September, they had a keg party. Next summer, the salon hopes to build a runway outside and project slides for a fashion show. There are plans afoot for the colder months, too: Clapson is looking into the possibility of throwing a winter haircutting party before Making Time, an occasional dance party whose longhaired revelers synergize nicely with his clientele. And now Philadelphia's demand for British-inspired haircuts has grown to the point that both Clapsons will have fulltime assistants come January.

Right now, Lee works on projects for his book and his website, Head Area (headarea.com) in a studio in East End. His long-term goal is to convert the building next door, which the salon also owns, into a larger space for staging and photography. And eventually, he and JoJo want to open a line of salons, as well as schools in London and the United States. Currently, JoJo holds the title of education director at East End, and she and Lee give seminars both at home and abroad.

"I love teaching what I do," he wrote again and again in a four-page, single-spaced email sent me after our interview. "You just cannot beat talking about your passion and idea, planting the seed in others and seeing it take off in others—that's just as rewarding as creating your own masterpiece. That helps me keep the faith in working in Philadelphia."

Now that Lee's chair has a waiting list, McCarthy stopped advertising who's cutting her hair.

"I'm not telling anyone who cuts my hair anymore," she said. "I don't want to wait months for a haircut. I tell them it's my husband."

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FINDINGS: A famous rapper paid us to wait in line outside the Trocadero and advise him as to what kind of cocktails the white people of today will buy. We took his money and gave this excellent advice: Don't waste your time devising a whole line of flavors. If it makes them dizzy, they'll drink it. But do invest in three different bottles. A red, heart-shaped urn will get you those shy, emotional, whites, especially if you wrap it in a cute little sweater. A black bottle is best for the pierced, doughy, Gothic whites. And a blue bottle always goes over well with the "chill" whites.

One Head of State Leaves Ours

In the past, graphic design duo Heads of State have symbolized their two-headed nature with bicipital eagles and stallions. Beginning this month, this crafty Janus of rock iconography will have a head on either coast as long-time Philadelphiaian Dusty Sommers settles into his new home, Seattle, Washington, where he is now art director for the battle-scarred indie rock warhorse Sub Pop Records.

He joins Jeff Kleinsmith (whose work he has long admired) in the two-man design department, which makes its home, along with the rest of the label, in the first floor of a downtown condominium.

Sommers, who has been designing posters, album covers, book jackets and just about everything else with fellow Tyler School of Art graduate Jason Kernevech since 2001,

when the pair began to produce posters for independent booking agency R5 Productions, hasn't left Philadelphia totally behind. The two 25 year-olds are still designing as the Heads of State; now they'll just have a head on either coast and collaborate over email and instant messenger. Sommers and Kernevech are known for their clean, conceptual work for clients like Idlewild and Wilco.

Sommers can't believe his good fortune.

"I get to do record covers full-time," he said. "It hasn't really set in yet."

At Sub Pop, Sommers is now responsible for doing twelve album covers a year, in addition to seven inches and in-house ads.

So far, he finds the new scenery to his liking. "I really like Seattle," he said. "We can walk out to the street and see the skyline and also see the mountains behind."

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ESSAY

THE PAST MELTS

Luc Tuymans's Paintings Shift & Fade Like Memories

BY WILLIAM PYM

One day this summer, I was alone for two and a half hours at the Tate Modern art museum in London, without a care. I nursed a chic but feeble croissant breakfast for an hour, then watched Italian youths in futuristic neon fabrics play hacky sack on the gravel banks of the Thames. I sat on a stone bench to tie my shoe and straightened up to find myself in the middle of a swarm of 13-year-old girls eating packed lunches and shouting hysterically to one another about this or that unintelligible teenage thing. I went through an exhibition of paintings by a Belgian man named Luc Tuymans, twice. I wasn't positive that my Philadelphia pals were on the way. I did not know where they were or where they were going.

They came, miraculously, and we collided on the mezzanine's calfskin couches. While crossing south over Blackfriars Bridge on the way to meet me at the museum, my dear friend Brendan had picked some orange roses from the pavement. They looked lost, or discarded, and he wanted to give them to me when we made our rendezvous. These flowers, he discovered a few minutes later, had been laid for a girl who had jumped to her death from the bridge. He rushed to put them back, and did not mention this event to me until yesterday.

This Luc Tuymans is worth knowing. In the last fifteen years, his output and reputation have grown to the point where his name is now plastered on the walls of every London subway station and the lips of every art student. Luc Tuymans is a star.

Artists have forever been polemicists and

pederasts and playboys, living lives beyond the usual norms of decent behavior. Unblinking pursuit of obsessions is part of their allure. It's sexy. That said, in the last forty years, the art world has become a little *too* sexy, certainly too vain, and so inflated through the media and the market that personality itself has become a widespread artistic technique, a legitimate and popular means of making work. This public and conscious creation of one's own mythology is a new trick, and the artists who can turn it shine with a new brightness. Their mastery of self and self-promotion is now a viable alternative apprenticeship to, say, being ace at paint-handling or color theory or any of the old duffer stuff. Humility to a craft and calling seems a real drag when an artist can create an entire universe that uniquely suits him, and live alone inside of it, thriving in the most secure of bunkers.

Tuymans used to be a nightclub bouncer, and with a little prompting he'll recount the revolting beatings and bloodiness that hardened him as a young man making a living. It may explain why he doesn't fit in among the ranks of art stars, why his work neither utilizes nor courts stardom. His far-from-flashy painting style looks by turns washed-out, diminutive, sloppy, offhand and unfinished. There's zero fetishism of materials, no luxuriously expensive cobalt pigments on epic fine-line battleships. He does not have time for that. He creates paintings over the course of one day. His imagery is elliptical, densely personal and politically wrought, ranging in theme from childhood reminiscences (is that a patchwork sample?) to Auschwitz (is that a gas chamber?)

and the tumultuous Belgian colonization of the Congo (yeah, what is that stretched leopard skin about?). They don't claim a convenient and easily interpretable artistic lineage; he's not interested in being a being a limb on an oak museum family tree. He has no gang of like-minded creators always on hand to reinforce what he does and prop him up when he's having his picture taken at the end of a bash. His paintings are not loaded with easy hormonal injections or a precise cultural geography apropos to the spiky, adrenal pages of fashion magazines—and when he does address magazine spreads, it is to copy the most banal of photographs and scrape out their psychological insides to haunting, rather than congratulatory, effect. His work is unreservedly unassuming.

The paintings appear this way because he does not spend his days sizing up models in a corner of his airy artist's loft, or marveling at hydrangea, or watching the light move across the floor. He does not memorialize his leisure time to sexy effect or distract with texts that send the synapses popping in spasms of convolution. There is nothing particularly wrong with any of that, but that is not what he does. In his marathon stretches of fourteen hours at the canvas, slathering wet paint on top of wet paint, he does not make paintings that celebrate the world of objects by creating more beautiful objects to fit into that world, to surround us. Rather, he describes a world that doesn't exist in any tactile place—not a complete parallel reality that one could hop into and stroll around, but an impossible and fractured world that we may have been to, once, but to which we will never again return.

The world I'm describing, as I reluctantly descend into the unfamiliar waters of psychology, is a place where memories are made and kept. The present surrogate of a past event, an echoic companion, is in conversation with the first bygone moment that created it, but its voice is muffled. We think our memories are like a collection of home movies, but the mind cannot record and store experiences like video tape; color, shape and sequence are not as true as when first felt. They are not false, exactly, they are simply something else. Complex neu-



Luc Tuymans, Maypole, 2000

rotic addenda like nostalgia, regret and trauma further scramble the original version. Bravely, Tuymans puts memory into a rectangular space.

The only Belgian painter of the last century more celebrated than Luc Tuymans is René Magritte. As a surrealist, Magritte mined the

subconscious and its symbols' intrusions into his everyday, and his images can be uncanny; they should, really, be completely sinister. Yet he made his tableaux familiar and soft on the eye, as conventional and polite and as much a walk in the park as a walk in the park. His canvases have ended up beyond paintings, as citizens, and Magritte is now a cornball coffee mug artist, delivering far fewer nightmares and introspection than his ideas merit. The paintings are company. They keep you company.

Luc Tuymans, however, makes no set; he uses no framing devices. As for their companionship, I am unable to describe to you what it is like to stand in front of one of his paintings because the paintings have vanished from the wall. I can look at my notes and postcards or talk to my friends, but I cannot see the painting. I have my memory, but no image whose edges I can feel. All that remains is a sense that something happened, somewhere, once.

I was surprised that Brendan had not told me about the flowers he had found for me on the bridge on the way to the exhibition. But he has told me now, and I will always remember them. And we had an awkward discussion about how a girl might have managed to commit suicide off such a short bridge in such a populous place, and we

will remember her now, too.

A terrific poet, Yves Saint Laurent, wrote in his diaries, "There are cheaters who use a power whose source is outside of them." Look him up. The art stars of the last two decades, the Jeff Koones and the Richard Serras and the Damien Hirsts, devoured the physical

world for fuel and ballast. They believed that the present and the future of their constructed universe was theirs to mold, and critics and viewers gasped at their pride and ached for more. Luc Tuymans invites the past, a rich and limitless source, to take shape on his canvases because it happens to be on hand, already inside of him; this is a truer method than predicting what happens from stumbling around with heavy boots, planting flags. In our days of terror and giddy fearmongering, Tuymans's work threatens because it is peaceful. It brings us close to a disaster we cannot name.

Tuymans makes me believe that a positive future can be found in a collective respect and investigation of what came before, in his etherial and silent reckoning. Grassroots politics have not been conducted in this way before, not in this part of the world, but perhaps a new strategy is in order. Tuymans is here to help inquisitive, creative people like you, my dear, you who are trying to make sense of your place in America. It's a practice that belongs especially to you, but especially to me too; we don't have to compete over it.

If you seek confirmation of these themes from another stupendous wimp, have a look at Peter Schjeldahl, who wrote a perfect and long out-of-print catalogue essay for Tuymans's 1995 debut American solo exhibition, right here in Philadelphia at Moore College of Art and Design. There's a pile of catalogues, perhaps the last pile in the world, for sale over at 20th and the Parkway. It's worth the walk. Marijuana does not help you remember things, and you've nothing to gain by throwing letters away. Thank you for writing to me at 1221 North Franklin Street #3R, Philadelphia, PA 19122. It sure beats getting mail from the Republican Party.

William Pym is a painter and curator who has lived in Philadelphia for two years. An exhibition entitled "Fabulous Histories: Indigenous Anomalies in American Art," which he curated with his colleagues, Brendan Greaves and Jina Valentine, is on view through November 19th at the Carpenter Center for Visual Arts in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

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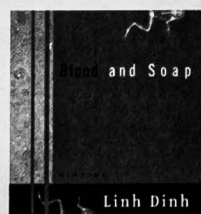
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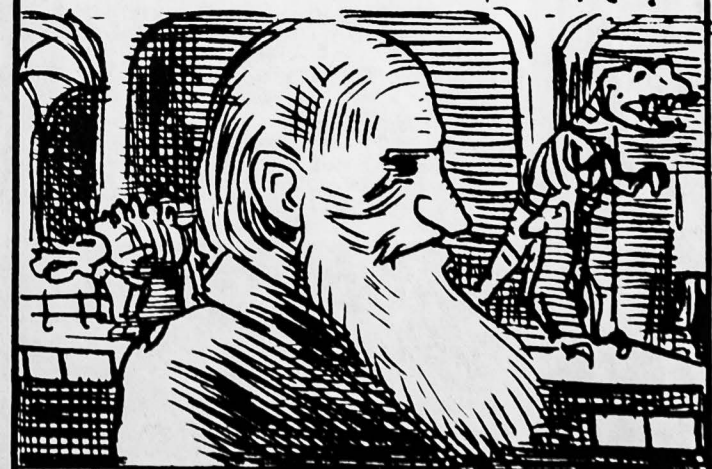
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VIEW MASTER

WORDS CAN'T DESCRIBE, BUT I'LL TRY

Laura Owens at The Fabric Workshop

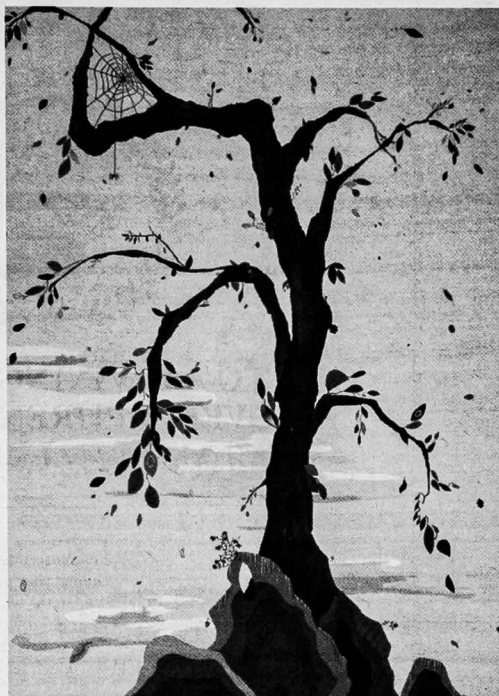
BY THERESA MARCHETTA

Laura Owens is busy. When the 34-year-old artist isn't juggling a tight international exhibition schedule, she's churning out paintings for patrons on a waiting list that reaches several years into the future. Her works, which are untitled, are busy, too, exploding with an array of symbols and signs. Frequently described as employing a "personal iconography," Owens relies on a stable of cartoonish figures. It's only reasonable to expect that someone might eventually ask what, exactly, these forms mean.

This September, Owens fielded just this question on the occasion of her exhibition, now closed, at the Fabric Workshop and Museum. She was asked why she chose a tree to be the subject of her new series of seven hand-embroidered prints on silk, what the tree meant. Either Owens wasn't sure or she didn't want to say, so she made a joke.

"I've never had an experience with a tree," she laughed.

Owens is known for a particular kind of realism that is boldly, yet loosely painted: her simple landscapes (impossibly steep mountains behind a veil of multi-colored leaves) and animals (googly-eyed monkeys hanging in wobbly trees) tenaciously integrate wildly dissonant colors, textures and applications. Her sky might be a pale and gradually painted azure while her leaf is a tremendous glob of orange, brown and purple. But though she depicts figures and recognizable objects that exist in the world, somehow they end up being



Laura Owens, Untitled, 2003

background of sky—no horizon line, no other trees inside the picture plane to create the illusion of space. This lack of depth combined with her bold and textured paint application emphasizes and fetishizes the surface of the painting, so important to modern masters and their critical boosters.

Owens has the boldness and appreciation of color and composition of a modernist, but she funnels the formal interest in flatness, surface and materiality through whimsical shapes, monkeys and trees. The use of this subject matter allows Owens to smuggle the ideals and prejudices of modernist painting into her work without drawing the usual critical fire. She dresses her wolves in sheep's clothing.

At the Fabric Workshop she departed from her usual work and printed her designs on silk, which she then embroidered, replacing her joyfully defiant strokes of gummy paint with meticulously executed stitching. The effects of this translation are technically remarkable but ultimately reveal her conservatism.

When the startling parts of her paintings are rendered stitch by stitch in cloth, they seem controlled and predictable. The translation from canvas to cloth has deprived them of their spontaneity and immediacy. We find in this output not a brave foray into large-scale formalism, but something watered-down and empty.

When she paints a tree, she is not representing a specific tree that exists somewhere in nature; she is not invoking political ideals or playing with landscape traditions. Instead, she paints the idea of a tree, the gnarled and idealized image of Tree-ness. Nor do her paintings create convincing depth. She positions the tree on a lump of dirt in front of a

When the startling parts of her paintings are rendered stitch by stitch in cloth, they seem controlled and predictable. The translation from canvas to cloth has deprived them of their spontaneity and immediacy. We find in this output not a brave foray into large-scale formalism, but something watered-down and empty.

Theresa Marchetta is an artist in Philadelphia.

REVIEW

RANDALL SELLERS

Drawing the Languid Aftermaths of Unspeakable Events

BY R.J. SUPA



Randall Sellers, Untitled, 2004

Standing six feet away, looking at a white gallery wall, Randall Sellers's drawings almost look like blank pieces of paper. Sellers draws with a light hand and a mechanical pencil, using an emery board to whittle its .3 millimeter lead down to a whisker. If you don't know to look for his futuristic, hazy landscapes, you might miss them all together. But galleries all over the world have begun to notice. During the past year, the 35 year-old former Mambo mover and Bean Café habitué, has shown in Boston, Paris, New York, Japan, and, just last

month, at Spector Gallery on Bainbridge Street. The show, entitled "New Lows," revealed a new phase of Sellers's work to his Philadelphia audience, one where figures begin to inhabit some of his miniature worlds.

Sellers likens his signature cityscapes to "the establishing shot that opens most films." In "New Lows," however, he begins to zoom in to imagine the characters that might live in these spaces, and how they might live. Sellers grew up in Honey Brook, Pennsylvania, about an hour west of Philadelphia, and "New Lows"

recalls the ephemera of the country; guzzled cans of beer, cinderblocks, dirt trails and acres of backyard junk lie alongside gaunt figures and bombed-out cars. The people haunt the foreground of the image while the background, their landscape, lurks as their own history. His cities are not decrepit, but nor do they work: broken brick walls, overgrown grass and empty roadways go nowhere. They inhabitants are a new kind of human figure, what Sellers refers to as "the hired help" and "tragic creatures." It's as though Sellers has dreamed up new versions of real people in his own history. These characters are finely and cleanly drawn, as beautiful and anxious as the scenery around them.

It seems there are really two drawings in each Sellers effort: the blurred wash of lines that reads as a blank from a distance, which the white expanse of the paper threatens to swallow completely, and the intricate details only visible up close. He forces the viewer's body into motion, insisting that they get up and stick their nose in the paper; he exerts a kind of control over this intimate relationship between his audience and his work, refusing to be passed by. You cannot be lazy with Sellers. He demands more than a sideways glance on your way to the door.

And Sellers's work has begun commanding attention from some very distinguished buyers. Four of his drawings were acquired by the Rothschild Foundation as a part of a planned bequest to the Museum of Modern Art in New York. And Peter Norton (he of the eponymous anti-virus software) purchased two Sellers drawings last January. Sellers has seen his work hanging in Norton's Central Park penthouse alongside canonical contemporary artists like Cindy Sherman and Felix Gonzalez-Torres, "the dream of a lifetime," he says.

With the Spector show behind him, Sellers says he will postpone future exhibitions for at least a year while he concentrates on building up a body of work. He hasn't completely left his abandoned cityscapes behind—most of the fifty or so drawings he completed this year were uninhabited. He also plans to record music, sculpt, take photographs, and paint in full color.

R.J. Supa lives in Philadelphia. He can be reached via email at rjsupajr@gmail.com.

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TO A NON-MOUSE

(In defense of the oft-malign'd undergarment, 'Tighty Whiteys')

My old friend was irate:
"I've not worn them since eight!
Boxers breathe, and they house my goods lightly."

But on men of small size
They ride up our wee thighs
And create a profile most unsightly.

Now you may think me vain
'Cause I bear the mild pain
That comes with the tight briefs of the masses,

Yet I feel rather smug
When my trousers are snug
Whilst my friend's pants are sporting two asses!



THROUGH A CODPIECE RUSTY

(Or: 'He Sits To Conquer')

I now sit to tinkle--
An untrustworthy winkle
Has reduced me to such circumstances;

He cannot be trusted
For he acts maladjusted
Ev'ry time I unfastens me pantses.

I suppose it's quite silly
To shake dew off my lily
In a manner that's deem'd a bit prissy

But if given the choice
I won't make my front moist
For a sissy stays dry when he's pissy.



OLE CAPTAIN LONG

(A sea shanty)

Oh sing, sing a-long
To this shanty o' sham,
Tiddle-I, tiddle-O, doodle-day;

For our brave Captain Long
Has just married a clam,
Tiddle-I, tiddle-O, doodle-day;

He rode to the church on the back of a newt
And slipped a gold ring 'round her muscular foot
And now he subsists on a diet of soot
Tiddle-I, tiddle-O, doodle-day!



ODE TO A DIVINING SPIDER UPON A NOVELTY PHRENOLOGY BUST

(Or: 'A Curious Tale of Augury by the Ottoman')

Whose unseen fingers
Guided your path
O spider upon the white dome?
Was it ghostly saint
Or sociopath
Who told you which temple to roam?

I toast my small pet,
My good friends made merry
And engaged in some light conversation;
Whilst tipping our glasses
He wove commentary
'Cross a skullcap of droll demarcations.

O'er a porcelain scalp
This wry critic ambled
As guests chatted over some snacks;
With each spark of wit,
The wee spider scrambled
To a square named SNAPPY COMEBACKS.

When affairs in my lap
Were in grave disarray
To ZIPPER POSITION he fled;
When he felt my banter
Was drifting astray
He descended down EGO's forehead.

In an hour or two,
I started to tire
Of playing arach-a-nid Ouiji;
But dear reader, fear not,
He didn't expire—
I just flicked his fat bobbin to Fiji.

The gist of this story
Is easily read:
If you find you're engaged in a chat
And you've a small critic
That dwells on your head
You'd best keep him under your hat!



MY LOVE SPURNETH YAMS

(A naughty sonnet for my lady)

Nigh all things written in Nature's green hand,
My love doth hold closely to her soft breast;
But of all that liveth in mud or sand,
None else but yams she doth hotly detest;
This tuber offends both in taste and touch,
Her palette, which fussy, cannot abide;
She wails 'what an unpalatable mush!
Spits them out, and pushes yon plate aside;
Yet I love a fat yam, both mashed and candied,
Although my appetites' often misplaced;
For when Nature sprouts a yam 'neath my belly,
My lady's spuds flee 'fore I can give chase;
Oh ladylove, please stop spurning my yams—
All I desire is to pinken your hams!

NOTE: A word of congratulations to Mr. Josh Nims and Ms. Noelle Dames, who were wedded in the Parnassian glens behind the Philadelphia Art Museum in full view of friends, family and the Divinity of Nature on the evening of Saturday, October 9th. Lord Whimsy, who conducted the ceremony, wishes to express his humblest gratitude for the privilege and his best wishes for the happy couple. — W.



THE ARCHIVE IS BUT A WAY STATION ON THE WAY TO THE DUMPSTER

Can Joseph Poon's Dim Sum Shine Through Cloudy Palates?

Brandy didn't like the hot and sour soup, and Melanie hated the wonton variety. The other Melanie got up from her chair to whisper to her mother, Tamera, that the hoisin sauce the staff of Joseph Poon had drizzled over her plate was gross. Katie was busy pushing everything around to make it look like she was eating, and Erika dropped her chopsticks in a glass of water while fishing out a thin and recalcitrant slice of lemon.

Last month, members of Girl Scout troops 4274 and 404 descended upon the Asian fusion restaurant Joseph Poon, named after its owner, the ping-pong champion, bon vivant and chef of the same name. It might be more accurate to say that Poon descended upon

them. Tugging on his ample belly and shouting about McDonald's—"High sodium! Make you thirsty! Drink 600 gallon of Coca-Cola!"—Poon howled his way through step-by-step instructions in the forming of American-, Hong Kong- and Shanghai-style wontons, as well as two varieties of dumplings. The 10 and 11-year old girls, who hail from Marlton, New Jersey and Westchester, Pennsylvania, came to learn the art of cooking dim sum appetizers under Poon's expert eye. Dim sum, Poon explained excitedly, translate into English as "touch" and "heart."

"Touch your heart," he said, the mock-serious professor, before returning to usual state of animated excitement. "More like ...

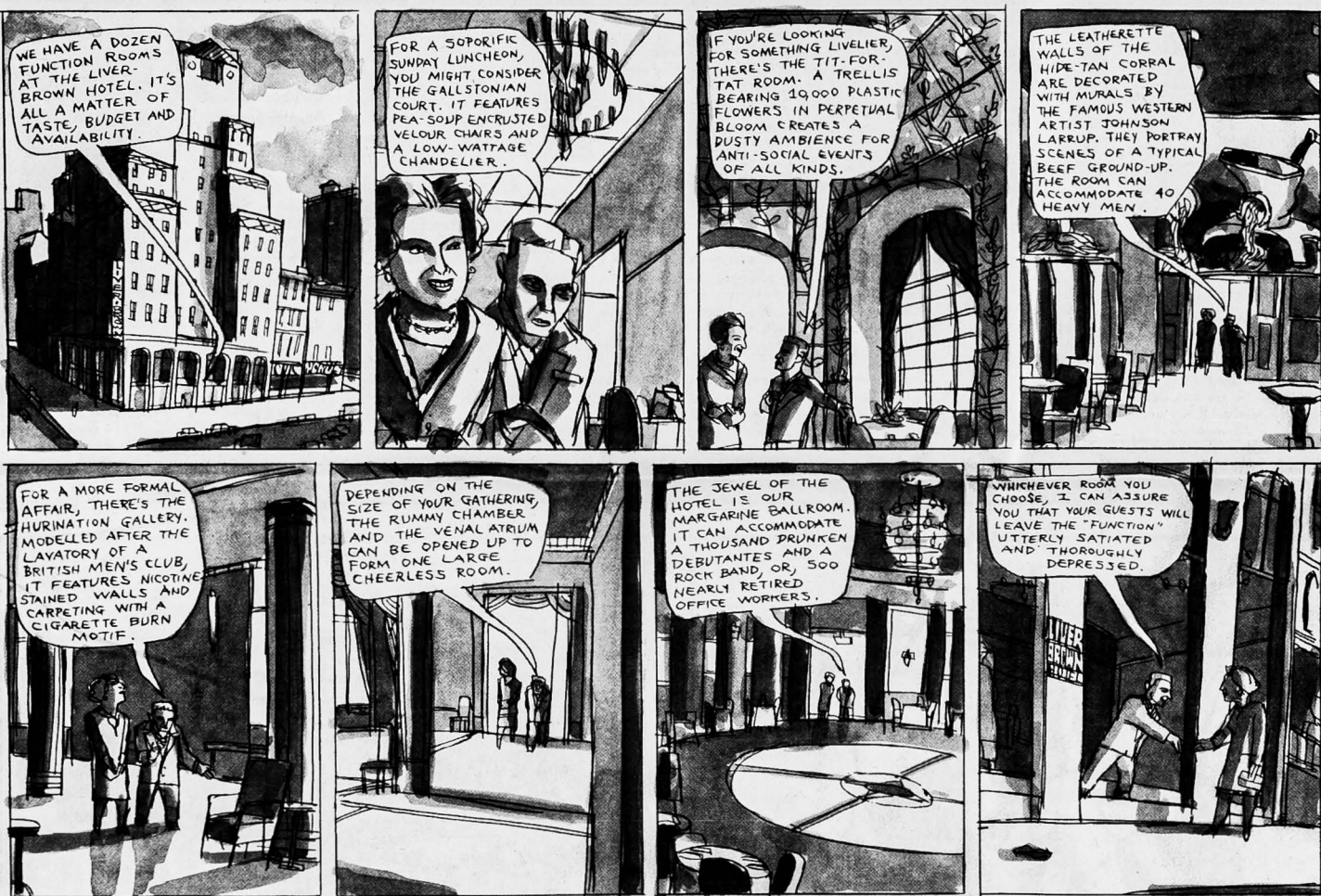
touch your belly!"

Helping these girls earn their Girl Scouts Around the World badge isn't the only charity that Poon practices. Last year, he took three Philadelphia high schoolers on a tasting tour of Hong Kong and China. The girls were picked from a program that trains underprivileged students in chef's kitchens around the city. Poon sponsored a writing contest. The three girls' essays touched, and won, his heart.

That wasn't all they won. There were the plane tickets, and the fancy dinners. While abroad, Poon fed them crabs that go for \$15,000 here, \$5,000 in Hong Kong. He took them to temples and shrines. They stood on the Great Wall of China.

Taking the culinarily underprivileged by the hand just may be Poon's calling, but it can be hard to break through the finicky tastes of your average uninitiated Girl Scout. Melanie had been so uninspired by the wonton soup that when her plate of dim sum appetizers appeared, she refused to touch them. She did, however, run to grab an autographed poster of Poon straddling Chinatown's Friendship Gate. She perked up when she spotted a plate of dessert that featured a cookie—not a fortune cookie, she said, but "a regular cookie, like the kind we eat." Then she whispered to her mother that maybe, after they visited the fortune cookie factory with the rest of the Girl Scouts, they could stop for burgers on the way home.

Ben Katchor's Hotel & Farm



South African Art Pirates Soak Landlubbers On the High Seas

The sun glares off the water just southeast of Miami, outside the windows of the Ixtapa Lounge, a room on Deck Five of Royal Caribbean's Navigator of the Seas whose squat hieroglyphic columns and dizzying carpet design seem intended to transport me back to the days of the Maya. The Gala Champagne Art Auction is getting underway, and Arthur Scheepers, auctioneer, is issuing sharp commands to a pair of young Eastern European assistants. His smooth voice and elusive accent are familiar to the curious guests from jolly announcements made over the ship's PA system earlier in the day. The ruddy, robust Mr. Scheepers is, we learn, a 30-something Afrikaaner from Johannesburg with a Masters Degree in Finance and a wealth of experience hawking on the high seas. Free champagne, distributed smoothly by a swarthy attendant, induces headaches almost immediately.

For the past half hour, about eighteen cruisers have been browsing through rows of framed prints leaning against easels and cushioned chairs. Today's special is a group of Salvador Dali's *Divine Comedy* illustrations—gory figurative vignettes of flayed skin, broken bodies and desolate landscapes. I note a few Norman Rockwell lithographs, too, one depicting a preposterously matronly schoolmarm, and another of a sulking student and his mother, whose face perfectly obscures the entire Caribbean region on a world map hanging behind the trio. There are also plenty of Peter Max prints—splashy, expressive images of patriotic icons—as well as "Painter of Light" Thomas Kinkade's printed canvases

of small towns, the White House, and a woodland cottage inhabited, apparently, by Jesus. The same glowing, sweetly colored images are available in Thomas Kinkade stores in malls back on the mainland. As Scheepers explains repeatedly, this is a request-based auction only; potential bidders were expected to tag items of interest during the preview, which are then the only objects subject to the block's bidding wars. Once we are seated, our gregarious host introduces himself and the pretty, Canadian Mrs. Scheepers, who taps busily at a laptop throughout the auction. They work for Michigan-based Park West Galleries, a company whose purposed 240 cruise ship auctions per week have generated one billion dollars to date.

Scheepers sets the bidding on Lot One, a Thomas Kinkade landscape, at \$220. An elderly man in the second row raises his hand. Scheepers scans the room for the hand of a \$240 bidder, but no hand appears. Impatient, he explains that the piece is worth at least twice its current price on land, and lowers his expectation to \$230. The audience gazes at him blankly. "Going once," the auctioneer cries, followed by a long, unbroken pause. "Going twice ... sold for \$220!" He makes it official with a sharp rap of the gavel.

Scheepers assures us that he and his wife "do not deal in reproductions" and that "everything is considered original." I look around the room, but I do not see a single original painting or drawing. There are some lithographs and screenprints (identical prints reproduced by skilled printmakers, rather than

by computers and laser-jet printers), but quite a few works appear mechanically reproduced. He clarifies his statement, explaining that all of the available art exists at "various levels of originality." We learn that many of the prints are hand-embellished, which means that the artist or an assistant has touched up a reproduction with actual paint in order to add texture and, presumably, originality.

The guests fail to get into the spirit of competition; almost everything goes to the first bidder and prices rarely climb beyond the opening bid. Many lots receive no bids at all, which is odd, considering that it is, after all, a request-based auction. Scheepers can barely disguise his frustration. More than once, he mocks his assistants' Slavic accents, tossing them a "No offense, mate" before loudly proclaiming to the audience that he and C. J. and Piotr are all good friends. He attempts to enliven the proceedings by throwing in extra canvases for free, after explaining that they fetch thousands of dollars when auctioned elsewhere. Some lots are brought to the podium facing away from the audience. The auctioneer discloses no information about these works except for the name of the artist, the work's going rate, and the depth of the discount available at today's auction. A middle-aged couple with a teenage son (all wearing matching Hawaiian shirts) bids on an unseen Kinkade, and a Dali that is revealed as a picture of a female nude's backside goes for \$730. But very few of these obscured pictures receive any bids at all. At other times, the auctioneer literally fails to give things away.

Sometimes Mr. Scheepers breaks the boredom with art history. A South African artist, he explains, obscures the faces of her models so we may imagine them as our own children. In case we were wondering, the Pop Art movement, which began in the 1960s, will end with the termination of Peter Max's career. And concerning Dali, whose works carry the heftiest price tags of the day, all we need to know is that the artist was "a complete freak" who had some paradoxical ideas about religion, faith, and salvation that we can easily disregard as "nonsense."

After almost ninety minutes of being bargained by the knock of the gavel and plied with flutes of champagne, the numbed audience begins to drift away. Those who bought art make shipping arrangements with Mrs. Scheepers in the back of the Lounge, while others head off to the day spa, the swimming pools, or one of the ship's half-dozen twenty-four hour ice milk dispensers. According to my Cruise Compass, which details the day's events, the auction has run at least fifteen minutes overtime. Already, new cruise guests are arriving to buy tickets for the Lounge's afternoon Bingo game, hosted by Jackpot Jeanie, an ecstatically friendly Chinese-Canadian who promises to Show Us the Money. As I leave the Ixtapa Lounge for the ship's casino, Arthur Scheepers, visibly sweating, is still aggressively proffering canvases and barking at his hapless assistants. Art that failed to sell today will presumably return to the block later in the week. The Champagne Gala Art Auction occurs daily on board the Navigator of the Seas.

—MICHAEL SULLIVAN

STATIONARY

THE SEPTA LETTERS

I Write to Strangers on the Train

BY LIZ RYWELSKI

R7, PHILADELPHIA TO TRENTON, 7 P.M.

October 16, 2004, the saddest day in my history. My favorite female painter and dear friend passed away and I had just come from her funeral. I had the worst headache I can ever remember having from days of tears and confusion and sleeplessness. I sat on the R7 in a three seater, facing forward to see the lights coming at me and not away. Passing in and out of sleep, I fell into a dream-memory where I could remember a space I was in years ago. It was a long arched hallway. The walls were made of earth, and there were shelves. Light was pouring into the hall through arched entrances, and the air was cool and comforting. I could remember having a camera with me, but could not remember what was on the shelves. I didn't know what was on the shelves, and I felt so anxious trying to remember that I woke up. I looked out the window to see where I was, and saw a profile of the person sitting in front of me. His thin lips and aquiline nose reminded me of where my memory was from. I was recalling my visit to Vatican City in the summer of 2001. The hall I was in was lined with shelves of busts from the 14th Century on. I remembered spending hours in there taking pictures and thinking about portraiture. I was really happy then.

The next day, he sent me this letter.

From: Alex Linsker
To: Liz_space1026@yahoo.com
Subject: Notes on trains

Dear Liz, It was wonderful to receive the letter from you on the train tonight. You are captivating. Who are you? What do you love? What excites you? What's up?

Today was the first time I ever took that train; one of my friends is producing a show in Philadelphia. I'd definitely take the train again; getting your note was the best thing that ever happened to me on a train.

After you left, I thought that the train to New York would be across the platform. Almost ended up in Savannah. But luckily made it home in time to write to you.

Where do we go from Trenton?
—Alex

Three days later, he sent another.

Subject: Confession

Dear Liz, Anyway, so your note and you stuck in my mind. Figure I'll fess up and say that I Googled your email address, and then when that didn't turn up anything, googled "1026" which led to "space1026" which led to your bio. Surprised there aren't more 1026s in the world. I like your bio and the K-Mart photos are a neat idea and I hope that the note was sincere and not an art project. And I hope that I didn't Eurydice you away by looking too long on the train platform. I think you look way better in person than in your photos, and I like your glasses.

To tell you some about me: I'm close to your age, born December 2, 1980, and I'm passionate about producing live events that bring people together. As a theater producer I've produced six shows, and am starting a company and doing freelance work and producing an in-development show with a Broadway producer who I used to work for. Went to NYU where I majored in Dramatic Writing at the Tisch School of the Arts and took many classes in

NYU's Stern School of Business, including MBA management classes, which I loved.

I grew up in Westchester County, New York and have been living in NYC for six years.

I really would like to talk with you some, and have no idea where it would lead, if anywhere, but I'm impressed with what I read of your work and Space1026 sounds interesting and hey, I'm attracted to you at first sight, for what that's worth. And the Philadelphia-New York thing is kind of a downer, because of the distance, so I wrote a poem which is purposefully not well-reasoned and makes it into the most serious, worst situation possible. :) Anyway, the poem is below and I would love to hear from you sometime, otherwise, thanks for your note and best with everything.

DISTANCE

Having realized she lives in Trenton, I mean Philadelphia, It is hard for me to write her casually and say, "What's up? What's next? Where do we go from here?" The thing is, that I would go to Philadelphia for her. I would. But the constant commuting could be a strain.

She was born in Massapequa; I know that much.

Massapequa, says Mapquest, is 35 minutes from New York.

A trip on the LIRR. I could do that.

I have done that.

But Philadelphia.

We met on the train as it neared Trenton. She passed me a note. Over my shoulder.

It said, in bubble letters, "i want you to know that right now looking at you in the window reflection makes me very happy"

Thank you, you are beautiful write me if you would like to" and then her email address and then "Please don't turn around and speak to me." and then the date.

Her email address led me to a website which had her bio, which said she works in Philadelphia. The thing with commuting is that it takes three hours out of your lives every time. Each person, or each way.

And if there is so much distance between you, then the distance might become the relationship, in a big way. She might become a three hour one-way trip, \$15 one-way trip.

Maybe we could live in Trenton, and go about our lives by traveling 1.5 hours to our cities and then traveling back at night to sleep.

—Alex

I wrote back with the stuff that's now at the top to explain how I was feeling that day. He wrote back with his phone number, but I never called.

Liz Rywelski can be reached at Liz@space1026.com. To date, she has lost two friends through this column and has only recovered one.



GENERAL ADVERTISEMENTS

IF IT'S NOT HERE, IT'S NOT FOR SALE

WANTED:

ADVERTISEMENTS, PROJECTS, PROSPECTUSES, MAPS, PLANS, SCHEMES, MANIFESTOS, CHARTERS, CHARTS, DIAGRAMS, FLYERS, PLEAS, REQUESTS FOR PROPOSALS, ASSOCIATIONS, NOTES, THE FUTURE, &C:

DEAR PHILADELPHIA:

This is the place to announce what you're doing, about to do, hope to do, or are considering doing. An army 10,000 strong will gather behind you. Your in-box will overflow. If you need it, ask for it. If you have it, offer it up. We are all broken, but maybe running the right General Advertisement can make us whole again. Post your bill or flyer here. Take a breath and summon the thing into being by enunciating the words that will make it real. I urge you, I urge you strongly, to take advantage of this opportunity immediately. Send your FREE GENERAL ADVERTISEMENT to editors@philadelphiaindependent.net immediately to run in our December issue. There is no limit on length but we reserve the right to edit but only rarely do we exercise this right. We're also taking ads for stuff for sale, rooms to let, shout-outs, love yous, hate yous, help wanteds, love/love pleas, etc. Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this matter. Use the classified as a message in a bottle, cast into a gray paper sea, or an inky footprint on a gray paper moon. It matters not, so long as you send your free classifieds to editors@philadelphiaindependent.net. Immediately. Now! I thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely yours,
HENRY FLOSS,
Auxiliary Classified Compiler & Compotroller

APARTMENT FOR RENT: Four bedroom, one bath house with new kitchen, new retro-Victorian Bath (well done), new Central air, W/D. Beautiful original hardwood floors and backlit stained glass archway between living room and dining room. Quiet, safe block with young professionals; walking distance from Italian Market, multicultural selection of restaurants, supermarket, park, and public transportation. Easy street parking. Ideal for couple or two young professionals. Pets negotiable. \$1,500.00 per month. Call Dr. Frank (215) 356-8061 or contact jfrank@temple.edu

APARTMENT FOR RENT: One roommate needed for four-bedroom apartment located at 45th and Chestnut. Currently occupied by three males in twenties and one cat. It is a large apartment with spacious living room and full kitchen. Location is convenient to University of Penn and Drexel University campuses as well as SEPTA public transportation. Off street parking is available. Rent: \$363/mo + utilities (mainly cooking gas and electric). The spot is open now and we are looking to fill it quickly. Contact Mike 267.693.7477 mmk37@drexel.edu or Jay 215.662.1223 (After 8).

ART FOR SALE: New "Imaginary Botanicals" posters by local Philadelphia artist Craig Stover. Guaranteed to be the one thing in the room you can't resist looking at. Bright and colorful, they often contain a hidden odalisque form. Learn more about the series and start your art collection with these affordable posters available on the artist's web site. Get the picture at picturemaker.com.

BICYCLES FOR SALE: Two small bicycles for sale. Both are in good condition, prices negotiable. They are suitable for ages 8-15 or a small adult. Email wqhs730@dolphin.upenn.edu (attn: Bikes) to bargain with me.

BOOKS FOR SALE: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Macropedia edition. Twenty volumes in excellent condition. \$100 or best offer. Call 856-424-0928.

CHESSBOARD FOR SALE: Official size wooden chessboard, made in Brazil. Pieces are hand carved, weighted and felted. Comes with box for pieces. Also have a vintage East German Garde chess timer. Contact kathleenatkins@yahoo.com for info and pics.

EDITOR FOR HIRE: Proofreading, copyediting, and editing. Quality work at reasonable rates by a published author and poet. OPADIT@gmail.com

EDITOR FOR HIRE: Editor/writer with national magazine experience available to troubleshoot your news and feature copy. Extensive experience with politics, health care, independent film, and pop culture. Online submissions only. Quick turn around. Half of fee paid with submission, remaining half upon completion. Email Posops@aol.com.

EVENTS, NOVEMBER: At World Cafe Live, 3025 Walnut St. Every Monday: Open Stage, hosted by Bruce Torres. 6 p.m. sign up. 8 p.m. show. 11/15, Robyn Hitchcock, \$20/\$25. 11/19, Shawn Colvin, \$40. 11/26, Chick Corea, \$45. 11/28, Minnie Driver, \$17.

EVENT, 11/05/04 thru 12/03/04: Show of Philadelphia artists at the White Dog Cafe at 3420 Sanson St. to benefit the Lancaster Avenue Autonomous Zone. All proceeds from the fabulous art you take home with you will go to LAVA, a new public gathering space in West Phila. with room for a library, darkroom, printing press, gallery, performance space, computer lab and office space where people working for a better world can share ideas and resources. Participating artists include Zoe Cohen, Matt Phelan, Maria Kydonieus, Mikel Elain, JJ Tizio, Edward Epstein, Michelle Wilson, Januario Estevez, Harvey Finkel, Rodney Atienza, Gerard Brown, Matt Height, Mandy Katz, Kellie Ricks and others. www.lavanatkins.com

EVENT, 11/18/04: Come meet our region's most promising entrepreneurs present their innovative business plans and hear Gary Erickson, Owner and CEO of Cliff Bar Inc., a model "sustainable" business, tell his inspiring story. This is a free event and open to the public. Refreshments will be served. We hope to see you there! When: Thursday, November 18, 4 p.m. - 7 p.m. Where: The Sheraton Rittenhouse on Rittenhouse Square.

EVENT, 11/20/04: Spa Sensations is hosting a Pamper Yourself Day featuring Manicures, Facials, Massage and Pedicures. Time: 2pm - 6pm on Saturday November 20th at 3901B Main Street in Manayunk, 2nd floor. All are welcome. Call 267-971-9409 for more information.

EVENT, 11/20/04: The Waldorf School of Philadelphia's second annual holiday festival. A crafts show with quality work by local artists and handcrafted toys and gifts made by the school's handwork group. Learn something about the Waldorf approach while celebrating the festive holiday season. There will be a special children-only gift room and children's crafting room; puppet plays and magic shows; live music performances; homemade lunches, baked goods and foods to go. Saturday, November 20, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. 7500 Germantown Avenue, 215-248-1662.

EVENT, 11/26/04 thru 12/19/04: God's Trombones by James Weldon Johnson at the Walt Whitman Arts Center, Camden's non-profit multicultural, performing arts center. Directed by Ozzie Jones (Black Nativity, Freedom Theater, Barrymore Award winner for Best Direction of a Musical), God's Trombones is a multimedia theatrical presentation conveying the message of seven sermons about the creation of humanity written during and after slavery. Shows Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m., Sundays at 5 p.m. For reservations call 856-964-8300.

FOUND: A pewter looking mug with clear plastic bottom engraved with initials, on October 10, in the back seat of a cab on Walnut Street. To retrieve, contact dula7@hotmail.com with the correct initials.

FREE BAND NAMES: Green Pin on the Black Map, Sigmund Freud, Department of Commerce, Rizzo Manetto, Toner Cloner, Baked Lays, Chook Industries, Dust to Dust.

GALLERY: In the spirit of Interpol Spaces (the series of art galleries opened by the Matador band to exhibit artifacts participating in the "Interpol aesthetic"), we in the Sympathizers announce the establishment of our own, multi-gallery, public museum to be titled "Indie, Inc." Be sure not to miss the gift shop (where we are especially committed to standards of excellence). Join us in the Ownership Society. Now through Thanksgiving we offer savings of up to fifty percent on all of our most meaningful concepts. www.thnthn.com

GOSSIP WANTED: Desperately seeking art gossip for artblog, viewable online at www.fallonandrossof.com/artblog. We know you know something. Contact Libby 215-387-1210 or email libby at libby@rossof.org or Roberta at sokrefl@comcast.net.

HANDYPERSON SOUGHT: Tinkering Goodness! Putter, niggler, monkey and doodle with my assorted antique brass lamps, available for a price, for your pleas-

ure. Contact kathleenatkins@yahoo.com for info and pics. **JOB WANTED:** Girl with decent knife skills seeks prep position in busy kitchen for Mondays and Tuesdays. Hard-working, responsible and professional. Awfully nice to boot. Call Leigh, 215-605-5667.

LAND FOR SALE: Philadelphia Real Estate Available - Land, Houses, Shells For Sale in Philadelphia. See www.geocities.com/gasheart for more information. Make your dream a reality!

OPERA ENTHUSIASTS: The Philadelphia Opera Enthusiasts, now in its 15th year, meets on the last Saturday of every month at a comfortable Center City residence. We share our collections and stories and all learn much from each other. Though predominantly gay, all interested in the Greatest Art are welcome—from neophytes to savants. We interrupt the proceedings for fellowship, LOL, good eats, to which all contribute. Meetings run from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m., and we are now set up for every format except DVDs: videos, CDs, LPs and cassettes. Information on next meeting's topic, membership, location etc: 215-224-6995, ralphh3@comcast.net.

OPINION: Meat is bad for everybody and everything. Consumers, slaughterers, health-care workers, animals, air, water, soil, you name it. Meat and other animal products routinely sicken people one way or another, while plant foods consistently make people healthier and stronger. Think this is an unshared opinion? Check out Meat Facts for the daily documentation of it, as mainstream press articles prove this assertion over and over again. Big Meat is going down in a big way, and Meat Facts is the blog that chronicles its decline and fall: http://sojoy.blogspot.com

PERSONAL: Let's start an abusive relationship. I will beat you out of love. You will love how close we get when we fight. You will hold me tight as I scramble to be free from your crushing embrace. You will push me away when all I want is to fly towards you and choke you or claw your face. We will be unified by our mutual antagonism. Two halves made into a whole. A bond that will never break, forever yours.

POLITICAL: "I know that it is utter madness, with all the obstacles and cynicism that exist, to try and make a real difference in this world, to try to effect genuine change for the good. But I also know this: it is madness not to try. This city, this nation and this world are bleeding for lack of compassion, for lack of humanity, for lack of understanding, for lack of listening and for lack of love. And if we do nothing, there is no reason to expect the system to change." Many people are concerned that the current political system is incapable of addressing our pressing human needs. Come and participate in a discussion group to explore ways we can creatively build something better. Call (215) 552-8888 for information.

POLITICAL: Socialists Wanted! Solidarity is an independent, non-sectarian socialist organization committed to the struggle for democratic workers' power, the replacement of capitalism with a new society without exploitation or oppression, and to the liberation of all oppressed peoples through their own freedom struggles. Visit www.solidarity-us.org and www.phillysolidarity.org for more information.

PROPOSAL:

We are starting an organization that pairs curators with farmers. Each curator will spend two weeks in a fertile valley carefully observing the visual tactics of farmers: the spatial relationships maintained by crop rotation, the effects of categorization and organization on color and form in the garden and the orchard, the asymmetry of outbuildings, and the sculptural resonance of agricultural tools. Some curators have also surveyed the effects of the stall, pen, and field on the performative bodies of livestock. If selected please be prepared to carefully balance your visual investigation with your farm chores; you will plow, till, milk, and prune when you are not collecting data, deconstructing the landscape, and determining how this residency will be incorporated into the gallery/museum. We have still not decided on a name for our fledgling foundation for the arts, but are open to suggestions. Please post all replies in this space by sending them to editors@philadelphiaindependent.net, under the subject line "Classifieds."

PROPOSAL: The Society for Lengthening the Present seeks members, funders, tactical consultants. We are dismayed by the acceleration of time and the continual shortening of the period that counts as now. Phase One of our operation involves lobbying to abolish the second hand from all wristwatches and clock-towers, limiting the time during which electronic mail may be transferred or new material posted to the Internet to a one minute interval every twenty-four hours, arbitrary checkpoints to hinder the progress of foot and vehicular traffic at key junctions, frequent sestas, designating certain public areas as protected zones of silent stasis, and a new Constitutional amendment making it obligatory for every American citizen to remember the Sabbath and keep it holy. For members: To join the society, recite a silent oath of your own devising. We will contact you when the time is right. For tactical consultants and funders: Please remit tactics and/or cash payments to TSLP, 1026 Arch St., Phila., 19107. All funders will receive complimentary tickets to the Society's annual golf tourney and costume ball. These events will likely take place in the near future. Until then, we kindly request your patience.

RADIO: We want listeners for WQHS, Penn Student Radio. Turn us on, we'll turn you on. Listen in at WQHS.org.

SINGERS WANTED: Allen Ginsberg's rewrite of "Amazing Grace" is easy enough to be put to memory, for the homeless, for the poor, everywhere. A recent study has shown that of the 100 cities studied, Philadelphia ranks 19 in cities consuming the most cold medications. In the study, it was found that the number one factor is pollution, while the second is unemployment. The stress of unemployment is so great that it weakens the immune system, and opens the human body to attack. With 45 million Americans without health insurance, it is clear that those with the most stress, those who need health

care the most, have none. Meanwhile all the White House staff, and every single senator throughout our fifty states has the very best health insurance our tax dollars can buy. Although the president has never called me to thank me, I say, "Mr. President, you are welcome, yes, you are most welcome. Although I have no health insurance for my own care, it makes me happy to know that you and your lovely wife and twin daughters are well, and safe." Now, if anyone would like to get together with me to sing Allen Ginsberg's version of "Amazing Grace," write me at CACONRAD13@AOL.com, or give me a jingle at 215-563-3075.

TAPESTRY WORKSHOP: A weekend weaving intensive for beginners. Friday evening: slides and discussion of tradition and contemporary tapestry (flat weave, pictorial). Saturday and Sunday: thread loom and learn tapestry weaving techniques such as flat weave, shape building, double weft interlock, pick & pick, half passé technique, passé oblique. By the end of the workshop, students will have completed a sampler, thus understanding the techniques used to weave a pictorial tapestry. Many nuances and references to French tapestry technique. Also an exploration of materials and alternative techniques. Design and finishing also discussed. Looms and yarns provided; please bring a fork (to use as a beat-comb) and scissors. Maximum six students, at 915 Spring Garden St., Nov. 19, 20 and 21. \$125. Call Kathryn, 215-769-1016.

THERAPIST FOR HIRE: I am a psychotherapist with 28 years of experience. I now have an office in Rittenhouse Square and I specialize in treating adults who have depression, anxiety, life transition issues, serious or fatal health problems, or are grieving a loss. I also do some life coaching. Please contact Wendy Forman, Ph.D. at 215-340-1554. I accept some forms of insurance and have a sliding fee scale.

ATTENTION:

VOLUNTEERS WANTED: Volunteer for Prometheus Radio Project. We just kicked the ass of the FCC in federal court. Wanna know what makes us tick? Volunteers! Prometheus needs help with: legal & technical support, networking & web editing, graphic design, various research projects and general office tasks. We are also looking for one special creative person who has experience with silkscreen design/printing for a one-time project. If you possess any of these skills and/or you just want to help build a movement for independent grassroots media, contact: anthony@prometheusradio.org or call 215-727-9620. Bask in our hotness at http://www.prometheusradio.org!

WEBSITE: Read my blog at ozzylynbean.blogspot.com. It's all about me. What could be more interesting?

WEBSITE: Are you tired of robots, dinosaurs, and robot-dinosaurs? Have you had enough dogs, dancing, and loudness? Is there a government satellite beaming messages of obedience into your brain? ... If your answer is no, then check out www.streetwavelive.com for your direct connect to the golden path to enlightenment.



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- 5BR HOUSE NEAR BROAD AND WHARTON—\$85,000
- 2BR HOUSE NEAR 18TH AND SNYDER—\$79,000
- TRIPLEX SHELL NEAR 17TH AND GIRARD—\$63,000
- 2BR SHELL NEAR 19TH AND WASH.—\$20,000

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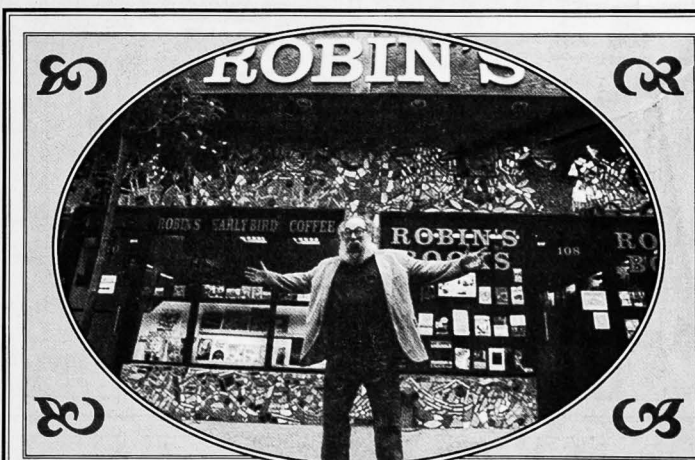
LAND FOR SALE

- 1656-68 N. 4TH ST, 15,000 SQ. FEET, HUGE, ZONED C-2 COMMERCIAL, STREET TO STREET CORNER PROPERTY, PLENTY OF SPACE—\$350,000
- 545 WILDER ST., NEAR 6TH AND WASH.—\$40,000
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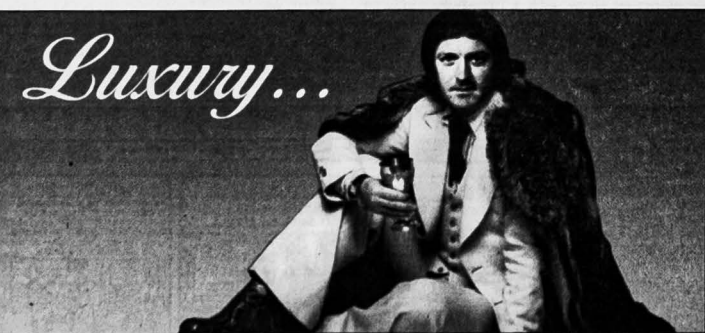
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MONTHLY FORECAST

PUT YOUR PANTS ON

HOROSCOPE: SCORPIO, October 24-November 21. Well, well, well. Aren't we mysterious and profound? Sure, sure, Scorpio—you're a little volcano bubbling under the surface of a calm sea. But hark! The plates shift and the mirror cracks and this month, my friend, you just may go totally crazy.

ADVICE: SCORPIO, October 24-November 21. Scorpio, your sign governs the pelvic, reproductive and urinary systems, which makes you especially prone to stones, abscesses, boils, carbuncles, furuncles, piles, ruptures, ulcers and priapism. Take care of yourself! And be sure to drink plenty of water.

NOVEMBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Things that I am Thankful for: 1. Good Health. 2. Enough Food. 3. The Indefinite Postponement of Apocalypse. 4. Friendly Animals, ie Ladybird. 5. Google. 6. Canned Goods. 7. Telecommunication & Other Technologies. 8. Pleasant memories. 9. Warm covers.	1 MUSIC: The Dillinger Escape Plan, Every Time I Die, Zao, Misery Signals @ the Trocadero, 1003 Arch St., 6 p.m., \$15.	2 GAMES: Why do children like them so much? I can't remember. Tears fall to my desk like so many drops of rain. I will count them and keep score, and declare myself Winner! Reassured, I cry no more.	3 BOOK SIGNING: Charles Santore, Jr., children's book illustrator, @ the Charles Santore Free Library, 932 S. 7th St., 6 p.m., Free.	4 READING: Open reading @ Molly's Bookstore & Cafe, 1010 S. 9th St., 8 p.m., Free. Monthly.	5 ART TALKS, YOU LISTEN: Paul Schimmel @ the Fabric Workshop.	6 ART TALKS, YOU LISTEN: Ann Hamilton, Judith Tannenbaum @ the ICA.
7 CONVENTION: Nerdcorn @ the Rotunda.	8 TRIVIA: Simpsons trivia night @ the Khyber, 56 S. 2nd St., 9 p.m., \$5, 21+.	9 MUSIC: Dwendra Banhart, Six Organs of Admittance, Andy Cubic @ the First Unitarian Church, 2125 Chestnut St., 8 p.m., \$10.	10 MEETING: Lancaster Avenue Autonomous Space (LAVA) Meeting, 4134 Lancaster Ave., 7 p.m., Free. Monthly.	11 DANCE: Les Grandes Ballet Canadiennes de Montreal @ the Zellerbach Theatre, 3680 Walnut St., 7:30 p.m., \$32-\$44.	12 PARTY: Undergirl record release party @ Tritone, 1508 South St., 10 p.m., \$7-\$14.	13 MUSIC: Jay-Z @ Wachovia Center, 3601 S. Broad St., 8 p.m., \$37-\$102.
14 TECHNOLOGY: Are Cell Phones the Headphones of the Streets? Or are Headphones the Headphones of the Streets? Is this a stupid question?	15 MUSIC: The Delgados, Crooked Fingers @ the First Unitarian Church, 2125 Chestnut St., 8 p.m., \$8.	16 PARTY: DJs Art Cuebik and Intrinsic spin punk, new wave, glam rock @ the Khyber, 2nd Floor, 56 S. 2nd St., h Nader's state coordinator.	17 LECTURE: University of Chicago philosopher & psychoanalyst Jonathan Lear presents "The Ethics of Dream Interpretation," 17 Logan Hall, 249 S. 36th St., 5 p.m., Free.	18 MUSIC: Dolly Parton @ the Wachovia Spectrum, 3601 S. Broad St., 7:30 p.m., \$37-\$57.	19 LECTURE: "The Civilization of the Cinema" @ Slough Foundation.	20 MUSIC: Animal Collective, Black Dice, Growing & Orpheum @ Vox Populi, 1315 Cherry St., 4th Floor, 9 p.m., \$13.
21 MUSIC: The Dead Milkmen, Electric Love Muffin, F.O.D., Nason's Head @ the Trocadero, 1003 Arch St., 6 p.m., \$15.	22 WARNING: Some persons who frequent internet "chat rooms" and "message boards" operate under false pretenses and with names not legally theirs. Proceed with caution.	23 READING: William T. Vollman presents "Rising up and Rising Down: Some Thoughts on Violence, Freedom and Urgent Means" @ the Free Library, 1901 Vine St., 7 p.m., Free.	24 DJ: DJ Diplo @ the Ukrainian National Home (U.A.C.A.), 847 N. Franklin St., 10 p.m.	25 ART: "Non-Retinal," a presentation of new work by blind sculptor David Stephens @ Slough Foundation, 4017 Walnut St., Wed-Sat 11-6, Free. Through Dec. 31.	26 RIOT: Critical Mass, a gathering of bicyclists on the west side of City Hall, 5 p.m., Free. Monthly.	27 ART: "Defining Modern," works by architect and designer Florence Knoll Bassett, at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, 26th St. and the Parkway, \$10. Through April 10.
28 ADVICE: Please, listen, all of you. Put down your drinks and put out your cigarettes before heading to the dance floor. It's awkward enough without the props.	29 GROUP RIDE: Annual Major Taylor birthday bike ride.	30 LECTURE: Pat Buchanan @ the National Constitution Center, 525 Arch St., 6:30 p.m., \$12. Call 215.409.6700 for reservations.	FLOWER OF THE MONTH:  Chrysanthemum Monifolium "Optimism, Cheerfulness"			

05 & 06 ART TALKS, YOU LISTEN:
 On Friday, Paul Schimmel speaks at the Fabric Workshop, 1315 Cherry St., 6 p.m. On Saturday, Ann Hamilton & Judith Tannenbaum present at the Institute for Contemporary Art, 118 S. 36th St., 2 p.m.

Mr. Paul Schimmel, chief curator of the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, will present on the occasion of the closing of the Laura Owens exhibition at the Fabric Workshop and Museum. Judith Tannenbaum, the Richard Brown Baker curator of contemporary art at the Rhode Island School of Design Museum of Art, and multi-media installation artist Ann Hamilton will speak on the occasion of the ICA's 40th anniversary lecture series. Tannenbaum, who served as curator, associate director, and interim director at the ICA between 1986 and 2000, organized Hamilton's 1995 "lumen" exhibition. She bravely explores the heady regions of sound, memory, language and imagination. Go forth, adventurer, and join the quest team. It's free.

07 CONVENTION: Nerdcorn at the Rotunda, 4014 Walnut St., Noon, Free. With DJs Chatty Cathy, Trishylicious & Dave Ghoul. Door prizes.

The word "nerd" first appeared in print in 1950, when Mr. Theodor Seuss Geisel penned *If I Ran to the Zoo*. "And then, just to show them, I'll sail to Ka-Troo, and bring back an It-Kutch, a Preep, and a Proo, a Nerke, a Nerd, and a Seersucker, too!" The accompanying illustration of the Nerd featured a thin, humorously grouchy human-like creature. On February 10, 1957, in a regular column devoted to defining Americanisms, Glasgow's *Daily Mail* glossed the noun as meaning "a square." Then, in 1970, the U.S. publication *Current Slang* took the critical step of defining a "nurd" [sic] as "someone with objectionable habits or traits... An uninteresting person, a dud." But what of it? Does this History bring us any closer to understanding the complexities and interior life of the Nerd? Has even the recent barrage of Max Fishers and Bill Gateses and Pharell Williamses truly helped us grasp this fragile and delicate sociology of being? My brain aches! I demand pain relievers! Perhaps the Nerd will yield the rich crop of answers I seek. Billing itself as a Convention of Fandom—as if one could be simply a "Fan," and not a "Fan of!"—I fear that it will be overrun with Cultural Critics and those of a more Observatory, rather than Participatory, bent. Perhaps Mr. Geisel was onto something when he coined the Nerd as a zoological specimen, condemned to the scrutiny of society, its gleaming eyes and its perfect, 20/20

vision. Come, Fans of Comic books, Action figures, Horror, Science fiction, Gaming, Anime, DVDs, Videos, Toys, Fans of Genres and Themes and Modes and Means, Fans of All Ages and All Stripes. Come and be scrutinized, and bring cash.


19 LECTURE: John Mowitt & Gregory Flaxman present "The 'Civilization' of the Cinema" @ Slough Foundation, 4017 Walnut St., 6:30 p.m., Free.

Once upon a time in the 1980s, a philosopher named Gilles Deleuze postulated that sound films had resulted in the "civilization" of the cinema. He then threw himself from a window and died. These events are not causally linked. Tonight, Professors John Mowitt and Gregory Flaxman will present on the former themes. First, Mr. Flaxman will unfold Mr. Gilles' notion of civilization. Then Mr. Mowitt will offer a theory of discourse that takes account of third world and postcolonial cinemas. There may be snacks to follow, but that should not be your primary objective in attending the evening's activities. If it is, you would be better served by making a trip to the bulk food aisle of your local grocer.

29 GROUP RIDE: Annual Major Taylor birthday bike ride. Meet at St. Mary's Church, 3916 Locust Walk, 10 a.m. Call 215.386.0316 for more information.

Worcester, Massachusetts: Paris of the 80s. So many a hero, has any ever been quite like Major Taylor? Born Marshall Walter Taylor in 1878 in Indiana, he moved to Worcester in 1895. Fond of performing bicycle tricks while wearing a soldier's uniform (hence the nickname), he became the American racing champion just two years after going professional. The first internationally acclaimed African American sports star (hence the heroism) still faced racism at home, where a Worcester developer tried to buy back his property after realizing it had been sold to a black man. He was refused membership in the League of American Wheelmen, sabotaged on the course, refused hotels, and denied victories. After retirement, the Major's fortunes fell. He died penniless in Chicago at the age of 53, and was buried in an unmarked grave. History has since done its best to rescue him. He was reburied in Illinois, and the Indianapolis velodrome was named in his honor. A Philadelphia DJ adopted his moniker, many years ago. And there's the Neighborhood Bike Works annual Major Taylor birthday ride. The Major may have been a hundred years early to make Worcester the Paris of the 80s. But, you know, they built him a statue. That was nice of them.

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November 9 **T.P. Luce**
Author of "The Block: Words, Pictures and Baltimore City in Black, White, and Gray,"
A new book of photography and poetry
8:00PM — \$5.00 Admission
Followed by **Open Mic Poetry Nite**

November 18 **African Sculpture Symbols of Culture**
Exhibit Opening Featuring Camden's Own
Unity Community African Dance Ensemble
4:30PM-7:30PM — Free Admission
Exhibit will run until February 28, 2005
Gallery Hours: Mon-Thu 10-4, Fri 10-8, Sat 12-2

November 23 **Open Mic Poetry Nite** — \$5.00 Admission

November 26 through December 19 **"God's Trombones"**
A Play By James Weldon Johnson.
Directed by Dizzie Jones
Baltimore Winner for Best Direction of a Musical
Black Nativity, Freedom Theater, 1994-1995
Fridays & Saturdays at 8PM, Sundays at 5PM, \$10
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Daniel Libeskind
Breaking Ground: Adventures in Life and Architecture
Friday, December 10 at 8:00 p.m.

An international figure in architecture and urban design, Daniel Libeskind was chosen in 2003 as the Master Plan Architect for the World Trade Center reconstruction. Born in 1946 to Holocaust survivors in Poland, Daniel Libeskind draws on his uncommon background and global perspective to explore ideas about tragedy and hope, and the way in which architecture can memorialize and shape human experience.

For Tickets (\$12, \$8 students) Call UpStages: 215-569-9700 • A book signing follows the event.
Info: 215-567-4341 or www.library.phila.gov author events

Saturday, November 13 at 7:30 pm • Root and Branch

PO' GIRL
Trio featuring Trish Klein of the Be Good Tanyas.
Vagabond lullabies, hobo-poetry, inner-city blues.

SHE-HAW
"A delicious combination of nifty bluegrass, bluesy honky tonk and sweet Southern waltzes."

Saturday, November 20 at 7:30 pm • Philadelphia Crossroads

DJ VICTROLA
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DJ ROBOT RAKE
Digital electronic music

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Friday, Nov. 12 9PM/510/21+
HELEN BACK & STR8 RAZORS
Guest DJ's: Fast Backbite & more
GOLD CHAINS & SUE CIE
Full time star records
DEATH SENTENCE PANDA!
KING GOD
Upstairs: BEARAN DISCO HEADACHE spinning postpunk/funk/techno

Saturday, Nov. 13 9PM/510/21+
Benefits for the Sara Moore Food FEEDING:
BITTER BITTER MEATS • O' MIGHTY ISS
THE SPINDELERS • HOPICTOPIER • HORSEY • SMOILER
Upstairs: BEWITCHED.COM BASH w/ JJ Brian Sabel

Tuesday, Nov. 16 9PM/510/21+
OUTRAGEOUS CHERRY
Rudyard Kipling's *Just So Stories*
LEE JIE-HON
Mediations: *Andersson* Records
CREEPING WEETS
Upstairs: DJ WILL THAMES plays 70's to turn of the century funk

Wednesday, Nov. 17 9PM/510/21+
International Pop Overthrow
BASTARDS OF MELODY • BLANK PAGES • HEATH HAYNES & THE CRYING SHAMES • POP IS ART • SNIVEL CHAINS • TIM BUTLER • MATHIEU WUDDLE
Upstairs: CORRAS & MATADORS
DJ's: Dave P., Hobbie, Julian S., Process, Adam Sparkles & featuring Special Guests dropping intelligence, consciousness, performance, beautiful releases, artwork for your ears, body, mind and soul

Thursday, Nov. 18 9PM/510/21+
International Pop Overthrow
IKE • THE QUEEN • THE JELLY BRICKS • PARALLAX PROJECT • THE JANE ANCHOR • STEPHEN LAMORENSEN • VAN WIGLES
Upstairs: JULIA FACTORIAL

Friday, Nov. 19 9PM/510/21+
HOLLY COLIGHTLY
Damaged Goods Inc. Mem. of Those Headbangers
THE WOGGLES • MONDO TOPLESS
Upstairs: CREAM YOUR JEANS
DJ's: Ron & Jason give you cheesy cheesy ass shakes

Saturday, Nov. 20 9PM/510/21+
JUKEBOX ZEROS
20 Years Old
BERETTA 76
THREE MINUS • THE BLOW GOES
Upstairs: FM, Night of forward thinking electronic music: 10 live performances & videos

Tuesday, Nov. 23 9PM/510/21+
THE KILLS
Rough Trade Records, East. African from Dessert!
BLANCHE **WALKIE TALKIES**
Upstairs: DEEP & spin house

Wednesday, Nov. 24 9PM/510/21+
MAD ACTION
Formerly by Gold, First Philly show in over a year!!
LAGUARDIA
Upstairs: CORRAS & MATADORS
DJ's: Dave P., Hobbie, Julian S., Process, Adam Sparkles & featuring Special Guests dropping intelligence, consciousness, performance, beautiful releases, artwork for your ears, body, mind and soul

Friday, Nov. 26 9PM/510/21+
BIG BUSINESS
Mem. of World City, Brooklyn, and Right One from City Hall
THE YOKELS • METROPLEX
Upstairs: RETURN OF THE LAST LOVE
DJ's: Chaitan & Rudyard spin psych

Saturday, Nov. 27 9PM/510/21+
BATTLES
Mem. of Ben Chaitan, Steve and Steven, Lynn, Tomahawk & Robert
TURING MACHINE
Mem. of Public Enemy, Public Enemy
EUPHONIE • SOUTH CONGRESS
Upstairs: ROCK TITS, DJ Just spin garage / rock / punk
Sunday, Nov. 28 9PM/510/21+

Sunday, Nov. 28 9PM/510/21+
RTX
Drug City Records, Mem. of Daniel Tru, Zoon & B Perfect Circle
GOLDEN BALL
EARLY MAN
DJ's: Ron & Jason give you cheesy cheesy ass shakes

Tuesday, Nov. 30 9PM/510/21+
MAKE A RISING
OTOHO BRUJO • NIAGARA FALLS
Feat. Eric Carabona
Mem. of golden ball
PAVLOV GREGOROVICH
Formerly of The Last Wave
Upstairs: NUCLEAR VOLCANO! music!

Thursday, Dec. 2 9PM/510/21+
LEGENDARY SHACK SHAKERS
UNION DEAD
Upstairs: NO TIGHT PANTS,
Dirty Philly Clothing Co. presents a neighborhood of dope hip-hop and reggae. DJ's: DJ M and Poon King

Friday, Dec. 3 9PM/510/21+
THE BIGGER LOVERS
NATIONAL EYE
Audible
Mem. of Phish, Lyle, Lyle's Brother
Upstairs: NO TAN LINES, Indie Rock

Saturday, Dec. 4 9PM/510/21+
KENNETH MASTERS
Horrific Records
THE FLIGHT BROTHERS • R-SON AND ADLUB
OFFWHITE, ROBUST & MEATY OGRE
K-THE-IB MEATY OGRE • ILL D. DAST
Upstairs: INTENSIFIED, Soul / Motown / R&B/soul

Sunday, Dec. 5 9PM/510/21+
ADOLF SATAN
Mem. of Ron & Jason, DJ's: Chaitan & Rudyard
DEFCON 4
RUMPELTISCHEN GRONDER
DRAYTON SAYER GANG

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DEC. 11. THE DATSUNS. BAD WIZARD
DEC. 14. CUB COUNTRY. RAINY RIVER
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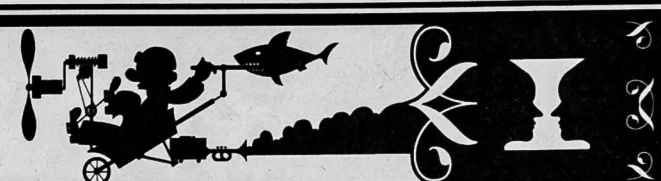
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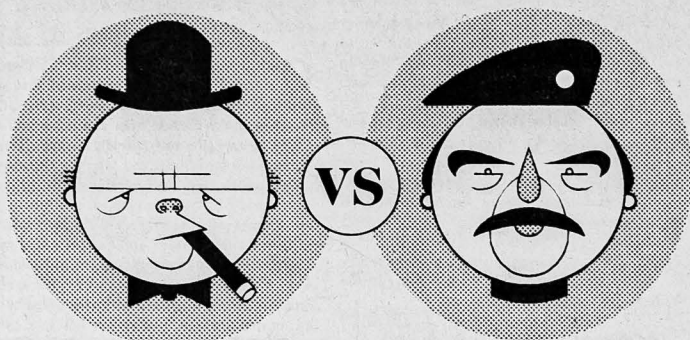


AUTUMN OF THE PATRIARCHS

This Month's Puzzle: *Relatively Speaking*

**WINSTON
CHURCHILL**

**SADDAM
HUSSEIN**



Who Said What? Match the Maxim to the Man

BY HENRY FLOSS

You are likely unaware of the secret which I am now about to tell you: I am not the Bureau's first Chairman. Please, be assured that my desk was not stained with the spilling of bad blood. Suffice to say that when I inherited my post, I inherited also a wooden filing cabinet far too heavy to lift, much too large to throw. It remained, and in my idle hours I explored its contents. My predecessor was a gentle man; he drew the strength for his arduous Bureau duties from the words of Winston Churchill. Now, I know little of our transatlantic brethren, but he who made a habit of afternoon tea, he knew much. My predecessor had filed Mr. Churchill's quotations into alphabetized categories: Enemy, Evil, Germany, Lady Astor, War. As I made my way through the cards, I shivered. Something was amiss. I had heard this voice before, but where?

I realized that Mr. Churchill is the rhetorical ancestor of another world leader, one ruthless, and incarcerated. And while Mr. Hussein lacks Mr. Churchill's very great moral character, I sensed something deep and common, a weighty stubbornness. I sensed that these two men were not such distant relations after all. I yearned to puzzle out more. Incidentally, I hope it does not shake you to learn that I am not the Bureau's original Chairman. My friends, do not build castles in the sand! None of us is ever first in line.

DIRECTIONS: To the right there are thirty-six pithy sayings. Draw a line from the words to the mouth of the man who wrote them. Answers are listed below and to the right.

1. Yours is a society which cannot accept 10,000 dead in one battle.
2. Although prepared for martyrdom, I preferred that it be postponed.
3. History is the reservoir in which exists, and from whose depth we derive, the laws that elevate the nation to assume its great mission for humanity.
4. A love of tradition has never weakened a nation, indeed it has strengthened nations in their hour of peril; but the new view must come, the world must roll forward.
5. Such was the labor of the past. From its womb it begets a doctrine; new in its spirit, in dress and color.
6. Let all cowards, piggish people, traitors and betrayers, be debased.
7. I like pigs. Dogs look up to us. Cats look down on us. Pigs treat us as equals.
8. History will be kind to me, for I intend to write it.
9. One of the most important qualities of any leader is saving others from death, not by marking the dark ditches on the road, but by preventing those who do not see the marks from falling into the abyss.
10. The price of greatness is responsibility.
11. Keep people's secrets and don't tell them to others or use them against them.
12. If anyone attempts to intimidate you, repel him and tell him that he is a small midge while we belong to a nation of glorious faith.
13. I have always felt that a politician is to be judged by the animosities he excites among his opponents.
14. I am afraid that some narrow-minded people may interpret what I say as merely panegyric of a state which the speaker is part of.
15. He has all the virtues I dislike and none of the vices I admire.
16. A fanatic is one who can't change his mind and won't change the subject.
17. What I wish for you and for myself, is that we make our choice without hesitation, get together and not separate, work and not be lazy ... and not to allow our enemy and his evil choices to succeed and defeat us, after subjecting us to bitter fait accompli that no one could accept.
18. We shall defend, whatever the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender.
19. Never give in—never, never, never, never, in nothing great or small, large or petty, never give in except to convictions of honor and good sense. Never yield to force; never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy.
20. We are the offsprings of the sword and the pen.
21. Don't talk to me about naval tradition. It's nothing but rum, sodomy and the lash.
22. The untamable horse will be killed if it is let loose without rider or rein to control it. It may fall into a ditch which will destroy it or break one of its legs. Its role on the basis of its duties will end.
23. Don't be attracted to easy paths, because the paths that make your feet bleed are the easiest.
24. Every day you may make progress. Every step may be fruitful. Yet there will stretch out before you an ever-lengthening, ever-ascending, ever-improving path. You know you will never get to the end of the journey. But this, so far from discouraging, only adds to the joy and glory of the climb.
25. Is it the people who draw the policy of a state, or is it, rather, the officials in power or the leaders who draw this policy? I say: policies are drawn by the official in charge of the state, and particularly, by the leadership.
26. We don't want war, for we want peace, but not at the account of sovereignty, dignity and maintaining our people's rights and land.
27. Nay, we hurl the Truth against falsehood, and it knocks out its brain, and behold, falsehood doth perish!
28. There is nothing more exhilarating than to be shot at without result.
29. Don't provoke a snake unless you have the intention and power to cut off its head.
30. When you have to kill a man, it costs nothing to be polite.
31. We shall show mercy, but we shall not ask for it.
32. Will the Americans ever do what is right?
33. History is the doctrine of the present that is linked to the spirit and values of the glorious past. Its spirit and high effect exist in you, valiant men and women.
34. Virtuous motives, trammelled by inertia and timidity, are no match for armed and resolute wickedness. A sincere love of peace is no excuse for muddling hundreds of millions of humble folk into total war. The cheers of the weak, well-meaning assemblies soon cease to count. Doom marches on.
35. The evil ravens and evil crocodiles still foster wickedness and would never cease their communication with their disappointed hopes, despite the fact that their deep wounds and disgrace can not be rubbed out with the passage of time.
36. Men occasionally stumble over the truth, but most of them pick themselves up and hurry off as if nothing ever happened.

WINSTON CHURCHILL: 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35
SADDAM HUSSEIN: 2, 4, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35

This Month's Game: *The Metamorphosis*

MAKE THIS POOR DONKEY INTO A MIGHTY HORSE

Presidents, film stars, and those of a more literary bent all scour the archives of the past for Heroes, digging up the bones of Giants to gain a little height in the world. Perhaps you have Mary Lou Retton to inspire you. I myself have Sam Loyd—Sam Loyd, mid-century Master Puzzler and Ingenious Maker of Games, and his famed Pony Puzzle! Of this spectacular brain-teaser, he once wrote, "Now the world has been moving very rapidly during the last decades. The Pony Puzzle will be a capital test of the acumen of the past compared with that of the present generation to see how many clever wits of today can solve it."

Mr. Loyd had no idea. Indeed, the world is moving so very rapidly that it makes me ill. But at last we trade our kingdom of stopwatches for a paper horse! Dear readers, disembark from the tilt-a-whirl of progress with me and give your brain the pleasure of the Pony Puzzle.

DIRECTIONS: Cut out the six pony pieces very carefully, and arrange them into the best possible figure of a horse. Use glue or tape as necessary. Answers and Winners will be announced next month.



On the Giving of Thanks

If we are honest about these things, we should not be embarrassed to admit to one another that the state of being alive can be, on occasion, a Real Drag. When I turn my radio dial to the news programs and live call-in programs, what rewards my patronage? I am bombarded with depressing accounts of corruption, gunplay and assorted instances of fraud; jewel thieves and the like. It so wearies me to listen that I cannot even bear to lift my hand to the telephone in order to dial the number of the station so that I might voice my opinions in the public forum. I am met with the same wasteland of information in the illustrated pages of the newspapers of record, and although I myself own no television, I have been made to understand that a similar state of affairs plagues the moving airwaves.

In these troubled times, how can a simple and scrupulous man look forward to a seemingly infinite succession of days? Eyes shaded, peering into the gloaming of the years ahead, we see no light; no tunnel distorts our perception of depth! From whence to draw the will to go on?

There are some moments, of course, when the veil of fog lifts. Pumpkin Picking in the cold, crisp autumn air, for instance, or Rock Concerts. But one cannot simply wander through fruit patches all day long or make oneself deaf in the pursuit of blissful oblivion! That would be immodest, and unbalanced. We are not in the business of shooting off our ankles to spite our teeth. Nor must we collapse in a heap, oppressed by the bleakness of local and world affairs. We must have our pleasures, and our hopes, too, and they must not be

too difficult to obtain. November is the time to sweep all this Gloom and Doom under the rug, to rise early and turn a blind eye to bedevils. When I raise my mug of spiced cider this Thanksgiving, dear readers, it will require no puzzling to proclaim in a loud, strong voice the things I am thankful for. Foremost among them are maps, charts and graphing notebooks; next among them is You.

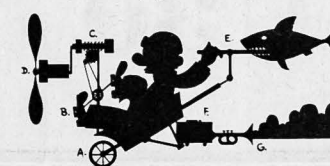
Dear readers, without each and every last one of you there would be no Puzzles, and even worse, no Games. I know that we have both struggled with some of the changes in our Bureau as of late. I know that we have not had Prizes in several months now. I know. But comfort yourselves with the fact that we still have Glory, Pride and best of all, the intangible, unfailing and undying triumvirate of Companionship, Camaraderie and Mutual Affection. In our Age of Despair and Disillusion, this is no trifle.

Dearest puzzlers, I will not say it again. When we next sit together at a table heaped with turkey and other delights, and you ask me for what I am thankful, do not blush when I say, "You."

Your Obedient Friend,
Henry Floss
Henry Floss
Chairman, Bureau of Puzzles & Games

HENRY FLOSS'S MONTHLY INVENTION

(Inspired by Rube Goldberg)



THE MUD SHIP

Your Cheap and Environmentally Friendly Wagon

Safely needed in the wheelbarrow (A), pilot begins to pump bicycle pedals (B). This powers gear shaft (C), which powers propeller (taken from discontinued Cheesecake fighter plane) (D), which powers the Mud Ship. The steering mechanism is provided by another dower, this one swivel-mounted and attached to a rudder consisting of one stuffed and flattened Nurse Shark (E). Though the Mud Ship uses no fossil fuels, for the proto-industrial ambience that gains respect on the open road, set electric vacuum cleaner on reverse (F), and leave a squealing trumpet blast of dust and dirt in your wake (G). If this device proves unsuccessful, try public transportation, but do not question the Mud Ship.

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